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# Integral Education and Collaborative Governance: An Analysis of the Rebrace and RTPCE networks

## *Educação Integral e Governança Colaborativa: análise das redes Rebrace e RTPCE*

## *Educación Integral y Gobernanza Colaborativa: análisis de las redes Rebrace y RTPCE*

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## Abstract

This study analyzes collaborative governance in the Rebrace (Rede Brasileira de Cidades Educadoras) and RTPCE (Rede Territorial Portuguesa de Cidades Educadoras) networks, considering their relevance to the consolidation of Integral Education in territories guided by the principles of Educating Cities. It addresses the following research question: How are intersectoral collaboration arrangements configured within these networks according to the perceptions of their managers and coordinators? The study aims to analyze intersectorality in both networks. More specifically, it seeks to understand the processes of institutional organization and democratic participation, as well as to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with intersectoral and Lusophone cooperation in strengthening Integral Education. The study adopts a qualitative approach using a survey research design. Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions administered to managers and coordinators of both networks. The findings indicate that Rebrace and RTPCE exhibit a significant degree of institutional formalization, clearly defined organizational roles, and established deliberative

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bodies, reflecting organizational maturity and effective coordination capacity. The results also reveal challenges related to civil society participation, the institutionalization of intersectoral cooperation, and the adoption of shared goals and indicators. The study concludes that Lusophone cooperation broadens the exchange of experiences, strengthens institutional capacities, and contributes to the improvement of Integral Education policies when supported by democratic, permanent, and intersectoral governance arrangements.

Keywords: Integral Education. Collaborative Governance. Educating Cities. Intersectorality.

## Resumo

*Este estudo analisa a governança colaborativa nas redes Rebrace (Rede Brasileira de Cidades Educadoras) e RTPCE (Rede Territorial Portuguesa de Cidades Educadoras), considerando sua relevância para a consolidação da Educação Integral em territórios orientados pelos princípios das Cidades Educadoras. Parte do problema de pesquisa: como se configuram os arranjos de colaboração intersetorial nessas redes, segundo a percepção de seus gestores e coordenadores? O objetivo geral é analisar a intersetorialidade nas duas redes. Especificamente, busca compreender os processos de organização institucional e participação democrática, bem como identificar desafios e possibilidades da cooperação intersetorial e lusófona para o fortalecimento da Educação Integral. O estudo adota abordagem qualitativa e delineamento do tipo levantamento, utilizando questionário com questões abertas e fechadas, aplicado a gestores e coordenadores. Os resultados indicam que Rebrace e RTPCE apresentam grau de formalização institucional, definição de papéis e existência de instâncias deliberativas, evidenciando maturidade organizacional e capacidade de coordenação. Também revelam desafios relacionados à participação da sociedade civil, à institucionalização da cooperação intersetorial e à adoção de metas e indicadores. Conclui-se que a cooperação lusófona amplia o intercâmbio de experiências, fortalece capacidades institucionais e favorece o aprimoramento das políticas de Educação Integral, quando sustentada por arranjos democráticos, permanentes e intersetoriais.*

***Palavras-chave**: Educação Integral. Governança Colaborativa. Cidades Educadoras. Intersetorialidade.*

## Resumen

*Este estudio analiza la gobernanza colaborativa en las redes Rebrace (Red Brasileña de Ciudades Educadoras) y RTPCE (Red Territorial Portuguesa de Ciudades Educadoras), considerando su relevancia para la consolidación de la Educación Integral en territorios orientados por los principios de las Ciudades Educadoras. Parte del siguiente problema de investigación: ¿cómo se configuran los arreglos de colaboración intersectorial en estas redes, según la percepción de sus gestores y coordinadores? El objetivo general es analizar la intersectorialidad en ambas redes. Específicamente, busca comprender los procesos de organización institucional y participación democrática, así como identificar los desafíos y las posibilidades de la cooperación intersectorial y lusófona para el fortalecimiento de la Educación Integral. El estudio adopta un enfoque cualitativo y un diseño de tipo encuesta, utilizando un cuestionario con preguntas abiertas y cerradas, aplicado a gestores y coordinadores. Los resultados indican que Rebrace y RTPCE presentan un grado de formalización institucional, definición de roles y existencia de instancias deliberativas, lo que evidencia madurez organizativa y capacidad de coordinación. También revelan desafíos relacionados con la participación de la sociedad civil, la institucionalización de la cooperación intersectorial y la adopción de metas e indicadores. Se concluye que la cooperación lusófona amplía el intercambio de experiencias, fortalece las capacidades institucionales y contribuye al perfeccionamiento de las políticas de Educación Integral cuando está sostenida por arreglos democráticos, permanentes e intersectoriales.*

***Palabras clave**: Educación Integral. Gobernanza Colaborativa. Ciudades Educadoras. Intersectorialidad.*

# 1. Introduction

Education is a collective endeavor shared among schools, families, public authorities, communities, and the various social actors involved in individuals' lifelong development. In this regard, Figueras Bellot (2013, p. 20) states that *"education is a shared responsibility: families and schools, but also many other actors that have not yet been fully recognized, shape a*

*new educational scenario—a new educational system that accompanies citizens throughout their lives and therefore needs to be acknowledged, valued, and developed."* This understanding extends education beyond the boundaries of the school institution and is consistent with the principles of Educating Cities, which recognize the territory, its public facilities, social relationships, public policies, and community practices as permanent educational dimensions.

In Brazil, Integral Education in Full-Time Schooling has been reaffirmed as a strategic policy for expanding educational opportunities, addressing inequalities, and promoting students' holistic development. Established under Law No. 14,640/2023, the Full-Time School Policy aims to *"promote the expansion of the school day in basic education through the provision of full-time education, with a view to students' integral development"* (Brazil, 2023). However, extending the school day, when understood merely as increasing the amount of time students remain at school, is insufficient. Integral Education is grounded in a conception of holistic human development that encompasses intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, physical, social, cultural, and political dimensions. Consequently, it requires diversified educational practices that are context-sensitive and closely connected to the territories in which they take place.

According to Aline Zero Soares, the debate on Integral Education in Brazil has been characterized by both breadth and complexity, having historically evolved through periods of progress, discontinuity, and renewal. Its origins can be traced to the Pioneers of the movimento dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova (the New Education Pioneers movement) of 1932, which contributed to establishing a conception of public education committed to the comprehensive development of individuals and the democratization of educational opportunities. Throughout the twentieth century, this perspective inspired regional and local initiatives that sought not only to extend students' time at school but also to broaden the purposes, spaces, and meanings of educational action by incorporating cultural, social, physical, ethical, and civic dimensions beyond strictly cognitive learning. During the twenty-first century, Integral Education has assumed a more prominent position within Brazil's national education policy agenda. Nevertheless, its recent trajectory continues to be marked by cycles of expansion, interruption, and reconfiguration, highlighting the challenges involved in consolidating it as a continuous and structurally embedded public policy (Soares, 2024).

This perspective strongly aligns with the principles of Educating Cities, which conceive the city as a territory of multiple learning opportunities where schools, public squares, libraries, cultural centers, healthcare facilities, sports venues, social assistance services, community organizations, and other institutions together form an educational ecosystem. As Gadotti (2006, p. 133) points out, the concept of the Educating City was consolidated in the early 1990s in Barcelona with the adoption of a Charter establishing the fundamental principles that characterize a city committed to education. Within this framework, the city ceases to be merely the setting for social life and intentionally assumes an educational role by fostering civic participation, a sense of belonging, democratic coexistence, and the expanded right to the city.

Implementing this perspective requires governance arrangements capable of coordinating different sectors, public policies, institutions, and social actors. The Charter of Educating Cities explicitly reflects this orientation by stating that *"every significant intervention must ensure coordination among the administrations involved and their respective services"* (AICE, 2020, p. 17). This statement highlights that the educational role of the city depends upon coordination, shared responsibility, and intersectoral cooperation. In this regard, Integral Education and Educating Cities converge in recognizing that no single government department, school, institution, or public policy can, in isolation, adequately address the complexity of individuals' educational, social, and cultural needs. Comprehensive human development requires interconnected networks of protection, care, participation, culture, sports, health, social assistance, environmental sustainability, mobility, and human rights, organized around shared public purposes.

Within this context, collaborative governance emerges as a fundamental dimension of Integral Education policies implemented in educational territories. It requires moving beyond fragmented, sector-based, and hierarchical models of public administration by fostering institutional arrangements capable of promoting cooperation, coordination, shared responsibility, democratic participation, and continuity in public action. Pires and Gomide (2016) contribute to this discussion by conceptualizing governance as a field of interaction among the State, civil society, the private sector, and public organizations through different coordination mechanisms, including hierarchy, the market, and networks. Within Educating Cities, the network model assumes particular importance because it is grounded in interdependence, trust, reciprocity, shared objectives, and the construction of collective actions.

Within the Lusophone context, particular attention is given to Rebrace and RTPCE, both affiliated with the International Association of Educating Cities (AICE). Rebrace brings together Brazilian municipalities committed to the principles of the Charter of Educating Cities, while RTPCE coordinates Portuguese municipalities that recognize the city as an educational territory. These networks provide valuable opportunities for exchanging experiences, producing knowledge, disseminating intersectoral practices, and strengthening public policies guided by the principles of Integral Education. The linguistic and cultural affinities between Brazil and Portugal further enhance opportunities for Lusophone cooperation, enabling comparisons of governance arrangements, participatory strategies, and approaches to territorial coordination.

Against this backdrop, the present study addresses the following research question: How are collaborative governance arrangements configured within the Rebrace and RTPCE networks according to the perceptions of their managers and coordinators? This question is justified by the need to understand how territorial networks of Educating Cities organize their governance processes, define roles and responsibilities, establish deliberative bodies, promote democratic participation, and address the challenges associated with intersectoral cooperation. By examining these dimensions, the study seeks to contribute to discussions on Integral Education, collaborative governance, and territorially based public policies.

The overall objective of this study is to analyze collaborative governance within the Rebrace and RTPCE networks. More specifically, it aims to understand how institutional organization and democratic participation are structured within both networks; to identify the challenges and opportunities associated with intersectoral cooperation in the context of Educating Cities; to examine how Lusophone cooperation may strengthen Integral Education policies; and to identify intersectoral practices and projects developed across different territories from the perspectives of the research participants.

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative approach using a survey research design. Data were collected through a questionnaire comprising both open-ended and closed-ended questions administered to managers and coordinators affiliated with Rebrace and RTPCE, in accordance with established ethical research procedures and following participants' informed consent through the Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido (TCLE) (Free and Informed Consent Form). The instrument generated both structured data and qualitative narratives concerning network organization, role definition, deliberative bodies, social participation, intersectoral practices, governance challenges, and perceptions regarding Lusophone cooperation. Data analysis combines descriptive and interpretative procedures to identify recurring patterns, convergences, tensions, and distinctive characteristics across participants' responses.

The article is organized into four main sections. First, it discusses the foundations of Integral Education and its relationship with the principles of Educating Cities, emphasizing the city as an educational territory and intersectorality as a prerequisite for holistic human development. It then examines the architecture of collaborative governance in Educating Cities, highlighting intra-sectoral and intersectoral coordination, institutional arrangements, democratic participation, and shared responsibility among stakeholders. The third section presents the methodological procedures, including the research design, participants, data collection instrument, and analytical procedures. Finally, the study analyzes the empirical evidence gathered from Rebrace and RTPCE, highlighting levels of institutional formalization, role definition, deliberative structures, challenges associated with intersectoral cooperation, and successful practices developed across different territories.

By focusing on Rebrace and RTPCE, this study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of how Educating Cities can sustain Integral Education policies through democratic, permanent, and intersectoral governance arrangements. It is based on the premise that network-based cooperation, when supported by participation, planning, negotiated commitments, and shared responsibility, enhances municipalities' institutional capacity and strengthens the development of educational territories that are more equitable, inclusive, and committed to the holistic development of children, adolescents, young people, adults, and older persons.

## 2. The Architecture of Collaborative Governance in Educating Cities

Collaborative governance, within the context of Educating Cities, may be understood as a political, institutional, and territorial architecture that brings together diverse actors, sectors, and forms of knowledge around shared public

purposes. This architecture goes beyond the traditional logic of sector-based public administration by recognizing that educational, social, cultural, environmental, and urban challenges cannot be effectively addressed by a single government department, institution, or public policy acting alone. In this regard, Bartz, Turcato, and Baggio define collaborative governance as a "consensus-oriented model of interaction" aimed at the "joint production of outcomes and solutions" (Bartz, Turcato & Baggio, 2019, p. 800). This perspective is particularly relevant to Educating Cities, where the city itself is understood as an educational territory in which schools, public facilities, social organizations, families, community groups, universities, councils, and other local actors share responsibility for promoting the rights to education, culture, participation, and human development.

This perspective is closely associated with the debate on new institutional arrangements, as contemporary public policies have increasingly evolved into "more complex arrangements involving networks and partnerships" (Lotta, 2017, p. 5). Within Educating Cities, these arrangements are reflected in the capacity to build shared agendas across different areas of public administration and between government and civil society. According to Lotta (2017), intersectorality has become an embedded feature of Brazilian public policies, particularly with the emergence of these new institutional arrangements, through which municipal, state, and federal governments increasingly adopt network-based implementation strategies involving intra- and intergovernmental partnerships, private stakeholders, and civil society organizations. Collaborative governance, therefore, extends beyond informal cooperation; it requires institutional design, clearly defined roles, negotiated responsibilities, communication channels, monitoring mechanisms, and permanent deliberative spaces.

From a conceptual perspective, collaborative governance presupposes a transformation in the relationship between the State and other stakeholders. Sant'Anna et al. argue that, within this governance model, "the State no longer stands above its partner actors" (Sant'Anna et al., 2019, p. 822), within a framework of dialogue and joint decision-making. This formulation is particularly relevant to Educating Cities, as it shifts governance away from a vertical model centered exclusively on governmental authority toward a more horizontal approach in which public authorities retain their non-delegable responsibilities while recognizing that the promotion of the common good depends upon shared responsibility and active participation. In the same vein, the authors emphasize that collaborative governance differs fundamentally from merely consultative processes because it involves a "two-way process of communication and influence" (Sant'Anna et al., 2019, p. 824). Accordingly, it is not sufficient merely to listen to citizens; institutional conditions must also be established to ensure that their voices effectively influence the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public policy actions.

Within this governance architecture, intrasectorality constitutes the first level of coordination. It refers to the capacity of a single policy sector to organize internally its teams, departments, programs, data, objectives, and operational processes before engaging in collaboration with other sectors. In the field of education, this requires aligning curriculum, teacher education, school management, assessment, infrastructure, democratic participation, and learning monitoring, thereby preventing educational policy itself from becoming fragmented. The Documento de Referência do Eixo Entrelaçar (Reference Document of the Entrelace Axis) explicitly states that coordination with health, social assistance, environmental protection, arts and culture, sports, science, and technology requires "prior intrasectoral organization and joint intersectoral planning" (Brazil, 2025, p. 40). Consequently, intrasectorality should not be regarded as a preliminary or secondary stage, but rather as the structural foundation of collaborative governance: only sectors that clearly understand their own capacities, limitations, and responsibilities are able to collaborate effectively with others.

Intersectorality, in turn, represents the second level of coordination and refers to the establishment of connections among different public policies, government sectors, social institutions, and territorial actors. According to the Documento de Referência do Eixo Entrelaçar, intersectorality constitutes a central strategy for promoting inclusive and equitable public policies because it requires the articulation of two or more public sectors within a given territory to identify, implement, and monitor actions that strengthen public services, professionals, and communities (Brazil, 2025). In this sense, intersectorality should not be understood merely as the aggregation of isolated initiatives, but rather as the development of a governance approach capable of overcoming administrative fragmentation and producing integrated responses to complex public problems. Within Educating Cities, this occurs when education, health, social

assistance, culture, sports, environmental management, mobility, human rights, and urban planning cease to operate as separate policy areas and instead become part of a shared territorial agenda.

The transition from intrasectorality to intersectorality may be understood through progressively higher levels of alignment: coordination, collaboration, and integration. Drawing on Cunill-Grau (2016), the Documento de Referência do Eixo Entrelaçar explains that coordination occurs when sectors align their activities to avoid duplication; collaboration involves the systematic sharing of information together with a clearer distribution of responsibilities; and integration represents the highest level of articulation, characterized by the continuous sharing of resources, information, and responsibilities within a "shared governance structure that facilitates joint action" (Brazil, 2025, p. 16). Accordingly, the architecture of collaborative governance in Educating Cities may be understood as a progressive process that moves from occasional interactions toward stable institutional arrangements in which stakeholders negotiate common objectives, develop shared indicators, pool resources, and sustain collective decision-making.

The empirical findings concerning Rebrace and RTPCE acquire greater analytical significance when interpreted within this governance framework. Participants' strong perception that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined indicates a considerable degree of organizational strenght in both networks, suggesting that actors clearly recognize their functions, responsibilities, and commitments within collaborative arrangements. At the same time, the findings demonstrate that consolidating collaborative governance requires far more than a rhetorical commitment to intersectorality. It depends upon the institutionalization of practices, the continuity of deliberative spaces, the formalization of operational procedures, the development of trust, and the continuity of actions beyond changes in political leadership. As Lotta (2017, p. 67) emphasizes, "intersectorality is not automatic", but rather depends upon deliberate action and sustained coordination among individuals, teams, and organizations. Thus, the more governance relies solely on personal relationships, the more fragile it becomes; the more it evolves into a shared institutional arrangement, the closer it comes to becoming a sustainable public practice.

Within the field of Integral Education, this discussion is directly reflected in the need for Political-Pedagogical Projects (PPPs) to incorporate an intersectoral educational perspective. The Documento de Referência do Eixo Entrelaçar states that "schools' Political-Pedagogical Projects (PPPs) must interact with an Intersectoral Education Policy" (Brazil, 2025, p. 40). This statement reinforces the understanding that schools in Educating Cities should not be viewed as isolated institutions but rather as coordinating hubs within educational territories. From this perspective, the PPP is no longer understood merely as an internal school document; instead, it becomes an instrument of territorial governance that explicitly incorporates partnerships, institutional dialogue, shared responsibilities, and collaborative strategies involving local organizations, public institutions, and community stakeholders.

The architecture of collaborative governance in Educating Cities may be understood as a layered institutional framework: the first consists of intrasectoral organization, which strengthens each policy sector internally., then involves intersectoral articulation, bringing together different sectors around shared objectives; the next comprises territorial integration, recognizing local actors, public institutions, knowledge, and practices as integral components of public policy, and finally, collaborative governance itself emerges as the institutional framework through which networks, partnerships, and shared responsibilities are transformed into institucional practices. From this perspective,Rebrace and RTPCE may be understood not merely as networks connecting municipalities, but as institutional arrangements that foster new ways of governing territories educationally by promoting dialogue, shared responsibility, negotiated commitments, and collective action that are the cornerstones of an Educating City.

## 3. Methodological Aproach

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, following Creswell (2021), as it seeks to understand meanings, perceptions, and processes from the participants' perspectives, thereby enabling the exploration of social phenomena within their specific contexts. With regard to its research design, the study is characterized as a survey study, understood as a systematic procedure for data collection aimed at describing the characteristics, opinions, perceptions, and trends of a specific group, as defined by Gil (2019). Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of both open-ended and closed-ended questions, allowing the collection of structured information as well as qualitative narratives provided

by managers and coordinators participating in the Educating Cities networks. Before completing the questionnaire, all participants were presented to the Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido (TCLE) (Free and Informed Consent Form), which explained the objectives of the study, the participation procedures, confidentiality safeguards, the voluntary nature of participation, and the participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time. Only after reading and formally agreeing to the terms of the consent form were participants granted access to the questionnaire thereby assuming the role of research respondents.

A total of ten questionnaires, with open-ended and closed-ended questions were distributed to members of RTPCE and Rebrace between 15 and 30 October 2025. The questionnaires were administered electronically through Google Forms and were accompanied by the (TCLE) form, ensuring voluntary participation and compliance with ethical standards. Of the questionnaires distributed, four responses were received from members of RTPCE, corresponding to 40% of those invited to participate in that network, whereas nine responses were received from members ofRebrace, representing 90% of the invited participants. Overall, thirteen completed questionnaires were returned, corresponding to an overall response rate of 65%. It is noteworthy that the principal coordinators of both networks completed the questionnaire, resulting in a 100% response rate among the highest-level coordinators of Rebrace and RTPCE.

Although the sample was non-probabilistic and based on voluntary participation, which is consistent with qualitative research, it is considered sufficiently representative of the perceptions of managers and coordinators from both networks. As Creswell (2021) argues, in qualitative survey research, sample adequacy depends less on statistical representativeness than on the richness of the data and the diversity of perspectives collected. The response rate obtained therefore provides sufficient interpretative credibility to address the objectives of this study, particularly considering that both networks possess well-established organizational structures and that the respondents occupy strategic positions within the governance of Educating Cities.

## 4. Data Analysis

The data analysis aimed to understand the governance and intersectorality developed in member cities ofRebrace and RTPCE. The empirical material, generated through a questionnaire completed by 13 participants from different municipalities, was analyzed using a qualitative survey approach, as described by Creswell (2010) and Gil (2019). For the analytical treatment of the data, the study adopts Discursive Textual Analysis, as proposed by Moraes and Galiazzi (2011), understood as an interpretive process that integrates the unitarization of texts, categorization, and the production of metatexts. From this perspective, the analysis is not limited to describing the responses; rather, it seeks to construct understandings of the meanings produced in the participants' statements. As Moraes and Galiazzi (2011, p. 14) affirm, the “cycle of textual analysis addressed here is an exercise in producing and expressing meanings.”

The data were organized and examined through a descriptive and interpretive approach, considering the exploratory nature of the study, the ethical commitment to confidentiality, and the identification of recurring patterns, convergences, tensions, and singularities in the discourses concerning collaborative governance arrangements within the networks under investigation. In order to preserving participants' identities while maintaining consistency with the study's theoretical and methodological perspective, they were metaphorically identified as voices of the educating ecosystem. This choice is grounded in the understanding that the governance of an Educating City constitutes a living organism, woven through relationships of interdependence, cooperation, knowledge exchange, and shared responsibility among different actors, sectors, and territories. Accordingly, each participant was identified by an element of nature—such as *Spring, River, Seed, Wind, Sun, Mountain, Fruit, Garden,* and *Horizon*—not as a means of characterizing their individual institutional role, but rather as a symbolic resource to highlight the plurality of voices that shape the dynamics of educational governance.

The responses were examined as a textual corpus in order to identify meanings, recurring patterns, convergences, tensions, and singularities related to modes of organization, participation, and intersectoral cooperation within the networks. Based on this analytical process, it was possible to develop interpretive understandings of the similarities and distinctive features between Rebrace and RTPCE, thereby generating analytical insights into collaborative governance within the context of Lusophone Educating Cities.

The Rede Brasileira de Cidades Educadoras (Rebrace) e a Rede Territorial Portuguesa das Cidades Educadoras (RTPCE) are territorial networks affiliated with the International Association of Educating Cities (IAEC), bringing together municipalities committed to the principles of the Educating Cities Charter. Rebrace comprises 45 Brazilian cities affiliated with the IAEC, fostering cooperation among local governments, promoting the exchange of experiences, and strengthening public policies guided by education as a cross-cutting dimension of urban life. RTPCE, in turn, brings together 101 Portuguese municipalities that are part of the Educating Cities movement, encouraging the sharing of practices, projects, and strategies aimed at building more inclusive, participatory, democratic, and sustainable territories. Both networks reaffirm the understanding that the Educating City extends beyond the boundaries of the school, recognizing the territory, public facilities, intersectoral public policies, and citizen participation as permanent educational dimensions.

The data concerning the length of participation in the networks reveal a balanced distribution across different trajectories of engagement. Of the total respondents, 38.5% had participated for more than five years, indicating an experienced group with substantial accumulated knowledge of governance processes and intersectoral coordination. Another 23.1% had participated for between three and five years, representing an intermediate group already familiar with the implementation cycles of network activities. A further 38.5% had been involved for between one and three years, reflecting the recent renewal and expansion of the networks. This heterogeneous composition fosters the circulation of knowledge, intermunicipal exchange, and the institutional continuity required to consolidate the practices of Educating Cities.

The respondents' length of participation in the networks was considered part of their experiential background. According to Creswell (2021), qualitative research should take into account participants' backgrounds and levels of involvement, as these factors directly influence their perceptions. Therefore, identifying how long each respondent has been involved with either Rebrace or RTPCE contributes to understanding the diversity of perspectives represented in the analysis of collaborative governance.

The analysis of the degree of formalization of the organizational structures within the Educating Cities networks revealed a consistent perception of well-established organizational arrangements. Using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (very low level of formalization) to 5 (highly formalized), the 13 respondents distributed their assessments as follows: 7.7% assigned a score of 2; 7.7% assigned a score of 3; 23.1% assigned a score of 4; and 61.5% assigned the highest score, 5. Consequently, 84.6% of the respondents rated the level of formalization in the two highest categories (4 and 5), indicating a broadly positive perception regarding internal organization, clearly defined roles, the existence of coordinating bodies, and institutional alignment with the international guidelines established by the IAEC.

The predominance of the highest rating reinforces the understanding that these networks possess structured governance mechanisms, stable communication channels, and clearly defined procedures for deliberation and intermunicipal coordination. The lower percentages assigned to levels 2 and 3 may reflect differences in the institutional maturity of local experiences or varying interpretations of what constitutes organizational formalization. Overall, the responses point to an ongoing process of institutional strengthening in both Rebrace and RTPCE, consistent with the recent trajectory of expansion and consolidation of the Educating Cities movement within the Lusophone context.

According to the *Voice of Root*, "The network has a coordinating committee composed of seven cities. It operates under its own internal regulations. Decisions are made during general assemblies with the participation of member municipalities." The *Voice of Seed* likewise confirms this degree of formalization within its network, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

> The network develops its annual planning in accordance with the principles of the Educating Cities Charter. Evaluations are conducted with the participation of all network members, demonstrating the usual commitment to the appropriate and efficient use of resources. Decisions are based on collective discussions and assemblies with representative participation from across the network.

The perception of highly formalized organizational structures within Rebrace and RTPCE networks aligns with the theoretical framework on network governance and the institutionalization of public policies. Abrucio et al. (2024) argue that cooperative arrangements depend upon consistent coordination mechanisms, clearly defined responsibilities,

and institutional stability—elements that underpin public action within intergovernmental contexts. Along the same lines, Pires and Gomide (2016) maintain that collaborative governance requires state capacities directed toward coordination, articulation, and shared decision-making, all of which presuppose a high degree of organizational formalization.

The predominance of ratings at levels 4 and 5 suggests that these networks operate through organizational structures sufficiently consolidated to ensure predictability, continuity, and legitimacy in their actions. According to Abrucio et al. (2024), these characteristics strengthen democratic governance by enhancing trust among actors and reducing institutional uncertainty. The recognition of formalization as a defining feature of these networks indicates that institutionalization constitutes a fundamental condition for sustaining intersectoral practices, fostering long-term commitment among municipalities, and consolidating the role of Educating Cities within the public sphere. As the authors explain:

> Collaborative governance extends beyond the federal dimension from the perspective of municipalities. Partnerships may be established with civil society organizations to support public management and introduce new educational technologies. Local governments also become stronger when they cooperate with other public institutions, such as Courts of Accounts, several of which have actively supported literacy policies. Internal cooperation within cities is equally important, particularly regarding intersectoral issues, which require joint action by multiple sectors to address complex public problems while ensuring children's rights in their entirety. The most emblematic example requiring intersectoral coordination at the municipal level is Early Childhood policy, whose outcomes depend heavily on integration among the fields of Education, Health, and Social Assistance. (Abrucio et al., 2024, pp. 50–51).

The analysis of the degree to which the functions and responsibilities assigned to members of the Educating Cities networks are clearly defined also revealed overwhelmingly positive perceptions. Using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (very poorly defined) to 5 (very clearly defined), the responses were distributed as follows: 7.7% assigned a score of 2; 7.7% assigned a score of 3; 38.5% assigned a score of 4; and 46.2% assigned the highest score, 5. Thus, 84.7% of the participants placed the clarity of roles within the two highest categories (4 and 5), indicating a consistent recognition that coordination responsibilities, municipal participation, and engagement in working groups are clearly defined and transparent.

The predominance of the highest rating (5) suggests that nearly half of the respondents perceive a very high level of formalization and clarity, while the substantial proportion assigning a score of 4 (38.5%), reinforces the understanding that, even when the ideal level of definition has not been fully achieved, there remains a strong perception of organizational coherence and shared responsibilities. The smaller percentages recorded for levels 2 and 3 (15.4%), may reflect differences in the institutional maturity of municipalities, variations in participants' experiences upon joining the networks, or specific characteristics of internal communication processes. Overall, the strong perception regarding the clear definition of functions and responsibilities emerges as an important indicator of the organizational robustness of both Rebrace and RTPCE, while also providing an essential foundation for understanding the effectiveness of intersectoral cooperation and the consistency of the governance processes that sustain the work of these networks.

These findings are particularly relevant when considered in relation to the challenge of collaborative governance within intersectoral political-pedagogical projects for Integral Education, whose effective implementation depends not only on a discursive commitment to intersectorality but also on the development of institutional arrangements capable of defining roles, establishing shared responsibilities, and sustaining coordinated action across different sectors. The strong perception regarding the clear definition of functions and responsibilities constitutes an important indicator of the organizational robustness of both Rebrace and RTPCE, but it demonstrates that the consolidation of intersectorality requires a cultural transformation within public administrations, enabling them to overcome sector-based, personalized, and fragmented practices. Consequently, the formalization of institutional bodies, operational procedures, decision-making processes, and shared deliberative spaces becomes a fundamental condition for transforming intersectoral cooperation into a stable and structuring practice capable of sustaining governance processes and promoting the implementation of Integral Education throughout the territories. According to Brazil (2025, p. 40), “the Political-Pedagogical Projects (PPPs) of schools must engage with this perspective of an Intersectoral Education Policy, providing for partnerships and dialogue.”

The strong perception regarding the definition of functions and responsibilities within the Educating Cities networks can also be interpreted through the lens of collaborative governance theory, particularly as formulated by Ansell and Gash (2008). According to these authors, collaborative processes depend fundamentally on organizational structures that establish clearly defined roles, transparent rules, and stable coordination mechanisms, since the absence of such elements tends to generate asymmetries, distrust, and difficulties in fostering engagement.

Clearly defined functions contribute to the distribution of responsibilities and facilitate communication among actors, while also strengthening collective commitment and mutual accountability—essential conditions for the success of intersectoral arrangements. In this regard, the high percentages observed in levels 4 and 5 indicate that Rebrace and RTPCE operate in a manner consistent with the framework proposed by Lotta (2017), thereby enhancing the networks' capacity to promote shared decision-making, integrate different sectors, and consolidate territorially grounded educational practices.

Lotta's (2017) study provides an analytical framework for understanding governance levels by distinguishing among intrasectoral relations, intersectoral relations, intergovernmental arrangements, and partnerships with social and market actors. Building on this contribution, the governance of Educating Cities can be understood as a multilevel and interdependent arrangement that operates within government departments, across different governmental sectors, through intergovernmental relations, and in territorial partnerships involving public facilities, civil society organizations, and local communities.

Across the experiences analyzed, the intersectoral practices and projects developed by the participants are presented as expressions of our voices, highlighting successful initiatives that emerge from local territories and reveal diverse forms of articulation among education, community, culture, the environment, sports, human rights, and social participation. Particularly noteworthy are: *Intergenerational Mentoring* (Voice of Horizon); the *Educational Garden* (Voice of Mountain); the *Organization of the 15th National Congress of RTPCE* (Voice of Garden); the *Rights Square Project and the Integral Rural School* (Voice of Fruit); the *Recycle Project and the Sports Circuit* (Voice of Spring); and *Educating City Day* (Voice of River). These experiences amplify the voices of the research participants by demonstrating that intersectorality is translated into situated actions, developed from the needs, strengths, and unique characteristics of each territory, thereby showing that successful intersectoral projects are sustained through listening, shared responsibility, collective participation, and collaboration among diverse social and institutional actors.

Hereu (2013, p. 38) reinforces the arguments advanced by Ansell and Gash by stating that “the city is part of the world's heritage, and learning is as well.” He argues that the city educates through its organizational structure, the priorities established by governmental teams, the proposals emerging from its citizens, and public campaigns promoting dissemination and participation. This perspective extends the previous argument by demonstrating that the effectiveness of intersectoral arrangements depends not only on clearly defined functions and responsibilities among actors but also on the city's institutional and political capacity to organize itself as an educating space.

The analysis of the existence of deliberative bodies within the Educating Cities networks sought to determine whether Rebrace and RTPCE possess formal collective decision-making spaces, such as assemblies, councils, or intersectoral committees. These mechanisms are fundamental for understanding the collaborative governance model adopted by the networks, particularly with respect to democratic participation, transparency, and coordination across different sectors. Among the thirteen respondents, 15.4% indicated that such spaces exist only partially, suggesting deliberative structures that are still under development or in the process of consolidation. Conversely, 84.6% recognized the effective existence of well-established deliberative bodies, indicating widespread recognition of the networks' organizational maturity.

These findings reveal a high degree of institutionalization of deliberative mechanisms, reinforcing the networks' commitment to participatory and collective decision-making processes—core principles of the Educating Cities movement and fully consistent with governance models grounded in collaboration and shared responsibility. The minority group identifying these structures as only partially established may reflect differences in implementation stages among municipalities or specific local characteristics affecting the internal dynamics of the networks. Overall, the predominance of positive responses indicates the existence of active formal deliberative structures that are essential for

ensuring institutional continuity, strengthening intersectoral cooperation, and sustaining the democratic organization of network-based governance.

The predominance of responses acknowledging the existence of consolidated deliberative bodies within the Educating Cities networks can also be understood in light of the debate on participation and social accountability. According to Matias-Pereira (2010), citizenship is exercised through active participation in the creation and transformation of the social order, whereby individuals assume collective responsibilities and contribute to the development of the norms governing public life. The author further argues that social accountability—understood as citizens' monitoring and oversight of governmental actions—should occur both in defining policy guidelines and in managing public policies.

The assemblies, councils, and intersectoral committees established within Rebrace and RTPCE constitute privileged spaces for exercising these principles, as they foster the direct involvement of stakeholders, strengthen shared responsibility, and increase the transparency of decision-making processes. The findings indicating the existence and consolidation of these deliberative bodies are therefore associated with a governance model grounded in democratic participation and the collective construction of educational policies across the territory. Vintró (2003, p. 51) reinforces this interpretation by stating that "participation is therefore a key dimension of any city project. There is no collective project without participation."

The information regarding governance and decision-making processes reveals that both Educating Cities networks operate with a strong participatory orientation. All respondents described governance as being based on regular meetings, general assemblies, active listening, and intersectoral dialogue, demonstrating that decisions are collectively constructed through the joint participation of municipalities, coordinating bodies, and committees. Recurring expressions, such as collective decision-making, general assemblies, elections, and intersectoral meetings, indicate the presence of well-established democratic practices that foster shared responsibility among members and reinforce the collaborative nature of the networks. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that participation is not merely a normative principle but rather an institutionalized practice that structures the governance model of both Rebrace and RTPCE, thereby contributing to the effectiveness of their actions and strengthening territorial coordination.

Information regarding governance and decision-making processes identified within the networks can be interpreted in light of the principles established by the Educating Cities Charter, which provides the international framework guiding the work of cities and territorial networks. The Charter affirms that citizen participation should be promoted through spaces for dialogue, debate, and deliberation, while also emphasizing that "every significant intervention must ensure coordination among the administrations involved and their respective services" (IAEC, 2020, p. 17), thereby reinforcing the importance of shared responsibility among stakeholders in the development of educational projects.

The reports provided by all research participants, highlighting general assemblies, collective meetings, active listening processes, and intersectoral coordination, demonstrate the practical implementation of these principles in the daily operation of Rebrace and RTPCE. The existence of collegial practices, formal deliberative bodies, and structured communication mechanisms indicates that both networks are organized in accordance with the principles advocated by the Educating Cities Charter: democratic, participatory governance oriented toward collaboration across sectors and territories. The respondents' perceptions confirm that decision-making processes within the networks not only reflect theoretical guidelines but also constitute concrete institutional practices that strengthen shared governance and reinforce the institutional coherence of Lusophone Educating Cities. This understanding is illustrated in the following excerpt:

> In the case of [...], the intersectoral actions related to Educating Cities primarily involve the participation of the other Municipal Secretariats and Public Agencies that make up the municipal administration (Health, Environment, Social Communication, International Relations, Culture, Social Assistance, among others). The legal instrument that legitimizes these intersectoral actions also provides opportunities for the participation of other sectors of society. (Voice of River).

This intersectoral perspective is also confirmed by the Voice of Sun, who describes the intersectoral participation within its territory as involving "Representatives of municipal departments, civil and social organizations, the Traditionalist Gaucho Center, and the local business association." However, the Voice of Garden presents a contrasting perspective when stating that "Intersectorality remains a challenge in our territory, although the coordinating nucleus has been working to strengthen the network."

Intersectorality constitutes a major challenge for public administration precisely because it requires overcoming centralized, hierarchical, and fragmented models of state action. From this perspective, Sant'Anna et al. (2019, p. 824) argue that "there is no longer room for a centralized and bureaucratic model of public administration," emphasizing the need for collaborative governance arrangements capable of bringing together diverse actors in addressing complex public problems. When asked about challenges associated with implementing intersectorality, the participants' voice highlight:

> Ensuring that all sectors and stakeholders involved in the implemented actions understand the multiple dimensions inherent to collaborative network-based work, while also incorporating into their daily practices the principles that underpin Educating Cities. (Voice of Wind).

The existence of structured deliberative bodies, such as assemblies, councils, and intersectoral committees, is directly aligned with the principles of the Educating Cities Charter, which advocates the establishment of institutional mechanisms capable of ensuring democratic participation and shared responsibility. The Charter emphasizes that municipal governments must promote citizen participation through stable structures for dialogue and decision-making, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and transparency of public action (IAEC, 2020).

The existence and recognition of these bodies within Rebrace and RTPCE not only respond to international recommendations but also demonstrate an ongoing process of institutionalization that strengthens collaborative governance. These structures function as spaces where municipalities and their representatives can jointly debate, monitor, and deliberate, thereby expressing a governance practice consistent with the conception of the city as a learning community built through collaboration.

The normative framework of the Educating Cities movement also underscores the importance of integrated planning and transparent communication as essential elements of democratic governance. The Charter states that cities should ensure that all stakeholders involved in the educational process have access to information that is accessible, sufficient, and understandable, thereby fostering coordination among sectors and ensuring that decisions are shared and understood collectively (IAEC, 2020).

These principles are fully consistent with the practices described by the respondents, who reported the existence of regular meetings, documented records of decisions, previously established agendas, diagnostic instruments, and continuous communication channels. The organization of these communication flows contributes to strengthening trust, increasing the predictability of governance processes, and fostering intersectoral actions aligned with the needs of local territories, thereby consolidating institutional practices that are consistent with the international framework for Educating Cities established by the IAEC. Figueras Bellot (2013, p. 21), when discussing the role of the IAEC, reinforces this interpretation by stating that "the reason for its existence is dialogue, exchange, and mutual knowledge of the various ways in which the Educating Cities Charter is implemented in each of its member cities."

The challenges identified by the participants can likewise be interpreted through the principles of the Educating Cities Charter, particularly regarding the need to overcome fragmentation and strengthen cooperation among the various sectors and city actors. Beginning with Principle 17, the Charter recognizes that the construction of an Educating City requires that "every significant intervention must ensure coordination among the administrations involved and their respective services, encouraging shared participation and collaboration between organized civil society and private initiative" (IAEC, 2020, p. 17), which implies addressing structural, bureaucratic, and cultural barriers.

Difficulties related to intersectoral coordination, communication among municipal departments, time constraints, and a limited understanding of the principles of Educating Cities reflect tensions inherent to broader governance processes that require institutional continuity as well as sustained investment in professional development, dialogue, and consensus building. Rather than undermining the work of the networks, these challenges highlight the

complexity of educational action at the territorial level and reaffirm the need to strengthen the collaborative capacities envisioned by the Charter.

The challenges reported by the participants regarding intersectoral coordination, communication among sectors, the fragmentation of actions, and the need for greater integration can be understood through the governance framework proposed by Pires and Gomide (2016). According to these authors, intersectorality depends on state capacities for coordination, cooperation, and institutional articulation, which must be continuously developed to ensure that different public agencies and actors operate in an integrated manner. As the authors explain:

> The literature on governance discusses the possible configurations of relationships among government, the private sector, and civil society organizations based on three broad models: hierarchy, market, and networks. Hierarchy represents a principle of integration and coordination characterized by authority exercised through laws and organizational structures (with a high degree of formalization and routinization but limited flexibility and creativity). The market model suggests that interactions among actors are based on self-interested exchanges organized through contractual relationships, which may also be applied to government activities (making use of incentives and cost-benefit analyses, thereby favouring greater flexibility and competition). Finally, the network perspective suggests that relationships among actors are grounded in interdependence, trust, identity, reciprocity, and the sharing of values and objectives (characterized by high flexibility and solidarity, although with lower sustainability). (Pires & Gomide, 2016, p. 124)

According to these authors, the absence or weakness of such capacities results in overlapping actions, limited information sharing, difficulties in building consensus, and constraints on the collaborative implementation of public policies. In this sense, the challenges identified within Rebrace and RTPCE should not be interpreted as isolated shortcomings but rather as structural characteristics commonly found in network governance processes, that requires collective learning, institutional stability, and permanent mechanisms for negotiation and cooperation capable of producing sustainable outcomes.

The contributions reported by the respondents regarding Integral Education reveal a broad set of conceptual and practical initiatives that reinforce the scope and relevance of this field within the Rebrace and RTPCE networks. From a conceptual perspective, particular emphasis is placed on disseminating the principles of the Educating Cities Charter, which broaden the understanding of education beyond the confines of the school and recognize the city itself as a privileged educational environment.

The networks also produce educational materials, organize professional development activities, and systematize experiences that encourage the dissemination of innovative methodologies while consolidating a shared institutional reference framework. At the practical level, respondents highlighted initiatives such as extending the school day, cultural, sports, and environmental projects, developing actions aimed at vulnerable populations, strengthening youth protagonism, and establishing governance structures that provide continuous territorial support for Integral Education.

This diversity of practices and reflections is closely aligned with the conception of Integral Education proposed by Moll (2012), who emphasizes the importance of integrating different times, spaces, and forms of knowledge within the educational process. According to the author, schools should not operate in isolation but rather in articulation with the cultural, environmental, and social dynamics of the city, thereby creating broader and socially meaningful educational experiences.

The initiatives described by the participants clearly illustrate this perspective by mobilizing multiple governmental and community sectors, promoting educational experiences throughout the territory, and expanding meaningful learning opportunities for children, adolescents, and young people. The contributions of the networks reinforce public policies grounded in social participation, equity, and an expanded conception of education, thereby directly engaging with the contemporary foundations of Integral Education and with the educational vision advocated by the Educating Cities movement.

The critical issues and opportunities identified by the respondents concerning the future of collaborative governance within the Educating Cities networks reveal a scenario that closely aligns with the reflections of Abrucio et al. (2024) on the need to overcome the historical fragmentation of the Brazilian State. According to these authors,

collaborative governance requires public capacity to articulate sectors, foster cooperation across different levels of government, and develop decision-making processes capable of addressing the complexity of social problems. Factors highlighted by the respondents—including resistance to change, sector-based organizational cultures, bureaucratic barriers, turnover among representatives, and weaknesses in institutional communication—correspond precisely to the structural obstacles that hinder the development of integrated action.

Conversely, the opportunities identified by the participants—including the creation of coordinating units and committees, the strategic use of technologies and data, the expansion of democratic participation, the exchange of experiences among networks, and the strengthening of territorial cooperation—reflect the pathways that Abrucio et al. (2024) identify as essential for consolidating collaborative management models. Overall, the findings indicate that advancing collaborative governance depends on the ability of networks and local governments to combine cultural transformation, institutional renewal, and the development of cooperative practices, all of which constitute indispensable conditions for more effective, participatory public policies oriented toward the common good.

## Final Considerations

This study focused on understanding how collaborative governance arrangements are configured within the Rebrace and RTPCE networks, based on the perceptions of their managers and coordinators. The collected data made it possible to answer this research question by demonstrating that both networks are characterized by institutional arrangements marked by significant levels of formalization, clearly defined roles, the existence of deliberative bodies, participatory processes, and intersectoral practices developed throughout their territories. These elements indicate that collaborative governance within Rebrace and RTPCE extends beyond formal adherence to the principles of the Educating Cities movement, manifesting itself instead through concrete modes of organization, participation, deliberation, and cooperation among municipalities, governmental sectors, and social actors.

The general objective of the study—to analyze collaborative governance within the Rebrace and RTPCE networks—was achieved insofar as the findings enabled a comprehensive understanding of the organizational structures, governance mechanisms, and challenges that sustain the operation of these networks. The analysis demonstrated that Rebrace and RTPCE function as collaborative arrangements that connect cities around shared principles, thereby strengthening Integral Education as a political, pedagogical, and territorial horizon. This conclusion is corroborated by the findings concerning institutional formalization, as 84.6% of respondents placed the organizational structures of the networks at the highest levels of the evaluation scale, recognizing the existence of stable coordination mechanisms, communication channels, deliberative procedures, and institutional alignment with the principles of the Educating Cities Charter.

The specific objectives of the study were likewise achieved. The first objective, which focused on understanding the processes of institutional organization and democratic participation, was addressed through the analysis of data concerning the definition of functions and responsibilities and the existence of deliberative bodies. The findings revealed that 84.7% of the participants positively evaluated the clarity of the roles assigned to network members, indicating organizational clarity, shared responsibility, and an effective distribution of duties. Likewise, 84.6% recognized the existence of well-established deliberative bodies, including general assemblies, committees, councils, regular meetings, and collegial decision-making forums. These findings demonstrate that democratic participation is not merely a discursive principle but rather an institutionalized practice that structures decision-making processes within both networks.

The second specific objective, aimed at identifying the challenges and opportunities associated with intersectoral cooperation within the framework of Educating Cities, was also achieved. The findings demonstrate that intersectorality simultaneously represents both a strength and a challenge. As a strength, it is reflected in the practices reported by the research participants, including *Intergenerational Mentoring, the Educational Garden, the Organization of the XV National Congress of RTPCE, the Rights Square Project and the Integral Rural School, the Recycle Project and the Sports Circuit, and Educating City Day*. These experiences demonstrate that intersectorality materializes through situated actions rooted in the needs and potentialities of each territory, bringing together education, culture, the

environment, sports, human rights, social participation, and the community. As a challenge, however, the findings reveal persistent difficulties related to communication among sectors, fragmented administrative cultures, continuity of initiatives, civil society participation, the institutionalization of operational procedures, and the adoption of shared goals and indicators.

The third specific objective, which sought to analyze how Lusophone cooperation can strengthen Integral Education policies, was also addressed. The analysis demonstrated that the relationship between Rebrace and RTPCE promotes the exchange of experiences between Brazil and Portugal, broadens institutional repertoires, strengthens network-based methodologies, and contributes to the dissemination of territorially grounded educational practices. Lusophone cooperation therefore emerges as a strategic dimension for enhancing Integral Education policies, particularly by enabling cities to share solutions, learn from common challenges, and recognize the city itself as an educational, democratic, and intersectoral space.

The findings also allowed for an understanding of the importance of intrasectorality as a prior and necessary condition for effective intersectorality. The study demonstrates that collaborative governance within Educating Cities does not begin solely through interaction among different sectors but also depends upon strengthening the internal organization of each public policy area, government department, or field of action. Intrasectorality refers to the capacity to internally organize teams, operational procedures, programs, responsibilities, diagnostic processes, and priorities, thereby preventing the education sector—or any other administrative sector—from operating in a fragmented manner. Consequently, the consolidation of an intersectoral agenda depends upon a robust intrasectoral foundation capable of ensuring institutional clarity, internal alignment, and a greater capacity for dialogue with other sectors.

Intersectorality, in its turn, emerges as the structuring axis of collaborative governance and Integral Education within educating territories. The findings indicate that the networks investigated recognize the need to articulate education, health, social assistance, culture, sports, the environment, mobility, human rights, and other dimensions of urban life. At the same time, the results demonstrate that such articulation does not occur automatically. Rather, it requires negotiated agreements, planning, active listening, professional development, coordination, trust, continuity, and permanent deliberative structures. Accordingly, the intersectorality analyzed in this study should not be understood simply as the coexistence of different sectors, but rather as a political and institutional construction that requires a cultural transformation in public administration and in the ways territories are governed.

Within this context, collaborative governance emerges as the central analytical category for interpreting the findings of this study. The Rebrace and RTPCE networks demonstrate that governing collaboratively requires creating the conditions under which different actors can participate in defining problems, developing solutions, implementing actions, and evaluating outcomes. Such governance depends upon the existence of deliberative bodies, communication channels, clearly defined roles, institutionalized procedures, and democratic practices that favour shared responsibility. The findings reveal that both networks have achieved significant progress in this regard while also indicating that the consolidation of collaborative governance requires overcoming excessive dependence on specific individuals, strengthening permanent institutional mechanisms, and expanding the participation of different sectors of society.

Another relevant aspect concerns the composition of the research participants. The return of thirteen completed questionnaires—representing 65% of the total distributed, with response rates of 90% from Rebrace and 40% from RTPCE—together with the participation of 100% of the main coordinators of both networks, provided considerable interpretive depth to the analysis. The diversity in participants' length of involvement further strengthened the findings: 38.5% had participated in the networks for more than five years, 23.1% for between three and five years, and 38.5% for between one and three years. This composition made it possible to bring together perspectives from individuals with different trajectories, experiences, and levels of involvement, thereby enabling a broader understanding of governance processes, institutional continuity, and network renewal. It can therefore be concluded that the collaborative governance arrangements of Rebrace and RTPCE exhibit a significant degree of institutional maturity, reflected in organizational formalization, clearly defined roles, the existence of deliberative bodies, and the implementation of intersectoral practices throughout their territories. Nevertheless, the findings also demonstrate that the consolidation of these arrangements requires continuous attention to the challenges posed by administrative fragmentation, social

participation, political continuity, data integration, the development of indicators, and the ongoing professional development of the actors involved. Within this context, Integral Education depends upon a governance model capable of articulating policies, actors, spaces, and forms of knowledge while recognizing that the Educating City is constructed through collaborative, democratic, and territorially grounded practices.

The findings of this study contribute to the field of educational policy by demonstrating that Integral Education is strengthened when supported by collaborative networks, democratic institutional arrangements, and permanent intra-and intersectoral coordination. The analysis of the Rebrace and RTPCE networks makes it possible to affirm that the Educating City is not realized merely through the existence of isolated projects, but rather through the collective capacity to develop a governance architecture that integrates planning, participation, shared responsibility, and public commitment to the holistic development of individuals. In this regard, Lusophone cooperation between Brazil and Portugal emerges as a promising pathway for expanding institutional learning, improving governance practices, and consolidating educational territories that are more equitable, inclusive, democratic, and committed to the common good.

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