


Institutional Capacities for Mainstreaming in Policies for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Rio Grande do Norte (2003-2023)

Capacidades institucionais para a transversalidade nas políticas para inclusão de pessoas com deficiência no Rio Grande do Norte (2003-2023)

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Abstract: The history of the fight for the rights of people with disabilities was marked by advances and limitations in the implementation of rights through public policies. For policies for people with disabilities to be structured, it is crucial to adopt complex and integrated approaches, one of the most innovative practices, in this sense, being transversality, which requires the development of institutional capacities for its implementation, articulating instances and management mechanisms and participation, to forge an ecosystem of social innovation. This article presents a descriptive and exploratory analysis of the institutional capabilities formally established for transversality in public policies for the inclusion of people with disabilities in Rio Grande do Norte (2003 to 2023), based on a qualitative research of official documents (e.g. normative , multi-annual plans, reports, etc.). The results suggest that during the period analyzed, in the inclusion policy in Rio Grande do Norte (2003-2023) there were limited advances and persistent challenges, marked by isolated initiatives and lack of prioritization. The influence of political alignment between federal and state governments has had a variable impact. As a result, we identified a fragile

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institutional capacity for the transversal inclusion of people with disabilities in RN.

Keywords: people with disabilities; inclusion; public policy; transversality; Rio Grande do Norte.

Resumo: A história da luta por direitos das pessoas com deficiência foi marcada por avanços e limitações na efetivação dos direitos por meio de políticas públicas. Para que políticas para pessoas com deficiência sejam estruturadas, é crucial a adoção de abordagens complexas e integradas, sendo uma das práticas mais inovadoras, nesse sentido, a transversalidade, que requer o desenvolvimento de capacidades institucionais para sua efetivação, articulando instâncias e mecanismos de gestão e participação, para forjar um ecossistema de inovação social. O presente artigo apresenta uma análise descritiva e exploratória das capacidades institucionais formalmente estabelecidas para a transversalidade em políticas públicas para inclusão das pessoas com deficiência no Rio Grande do Norte (2003 a 2023), tendo como base uma pesquisa qualitativa de documentos oficiais (ex. normativos, planos plurianuais, relatórios etc.). Os resultados sugerem que durante o período analisado, na política de inclusão no Rio Grande do Norte (2003-2023) houve avanços limitados e desafios persistentes, marcada por iniciativas isoladas e falta de priorização. A influência do alinhamento político entre governos federal e estadual teve um impacto variável. Como resultado, identificamos uma capacidade institucional frágil para a transversalidade da inclusão das pessoas com deficiência no RN.

Palavras-chave: pessoas com deficiência; inclusão; políticas públicas; transversalidade; Rio Grande do Norte.

1. INTRODUÇÃO

The struggle for the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities has been marked by progress, challenges, and discontinuities. Despite the achievements of social movements, the full respect for the rights of people with disabilities still faces obstacles. Internationally, the recognition of disability rights reached a crucial milestone with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons in 1975 (Nunes, 2023). The Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities, adopted in 1999, was ratified by Brazil in 2001 (Brasil, 2001). The International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, established in 2007, were incorporated into Brazil's legal framework with constitutional status in 2009 (Brasil, 2009).

This commitment to international standards contributed to the creation of the Brazilian Law on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in 2015 (Brasil, 2015), which established the Statute of Persons with Disabilities. This law represents a foundational legal framework, recognizing diversity and ensuring rights in areas such as health, education, housing, and employment.

In Brazil, data from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) indicates that, in 2022, there were 18.6 million people aged two or older with disabilities, representing 8.9% of the population (IBGE, 2023). The Northeast region ranks higher than the national average, with 10.1% of its population classified as having some type of disability, while in Rio Grande do Norte, this rate is 9.9% (IBGE, 2023). People with disabilities in Brazil face significant inequalities. The illiteracy rate among people with disabilities was 19.1%, compared to 4.1% among those without disabilities. Likewise, the labor market participation rate for people with disabilities was 29.2%, while for those without disabilities, it was 66.4%, therefore being more than double (IBGE, 2023).

The inclusion of people with disabilities is a complex and multidimensional issue (Rittel & Weber, 1979), requiring integrated and innovative public policies that overcome sectoral fragmentation and consider individuals in their entirety. In this context, mainstreaming in public policies emerges as a strategy for developing new institutional frameworks through management and social participation mechanisms that, when articulated, shape and sustain a social innovation ecosystem (Andion, Alperstedt & Graeff, 2020). This approach incorporates the perspectives of historically discriminated groups and promotes democratic experimentalism (Unger, 2011; C. Teixeira, 2010; Gasparido, 2018).

This article aims to analyze the development of institutional capacities for mainstreaming in state policies for the inclusion of people with disabilities in Rio Grande do Norte between 2003 and 2023. The research focuses on management and participation mechanisms that enable a social innovation ecosystem for mainstreaming.

The article is organized into six sections: this introduction, an overview of policies for people with disabilities, a theoretical reflection on mainstreaming as

an innovative approach in disability policies, methodological procedures, a description of the results, and finally, a discussion of the results and final considerations.

2. POLICIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The struggle of people with disabilities for their rights has been marked by achievements, but also by restrictions and violations (Borges & Steil, 2023). Between the 15th and 18th centuries, disability was often associated with stigmatization and marginalization, with people with disabilities being treated as incapable and disability perceived as a condition to be corrected (M. Teixeira, 2010; França, 2014; Borges & Steil, 2023).

It was only in the 20th century that the rights of people with disabilities began to be formally recognized by public authorities, reflecting a more humanitarian perspective towards this social group (M. Teixeira, 2010). Social movements also performed a key role in driving a significant paradigm shift in disability rights. Nunes (2023) asserts that this shift stemmed from the pressure of social movements advocating for the recognition of the rights of people with disabilities. This process led to the formal recognition of these rights through international conventions and treaties in the second half of the 20th century.

The first major milestone was the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, established by the United Nations (UN) in 1975, recognizing these rights as basic human rights (Santos & Góes, 2018; Nunes, 2023). This was followed by the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities, adopted in 1999 and ratified by Brazil in 2001 (Brasil, 2001). In 2007, the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol were adopted by Brazil with constitutional status in 2009 (Brasil, 2009; Santos & Góes, 2018).

As noted by Cunha (2021, p. 316), in Brazil, the disability rights movement gained strength during the country's democratization process, bringing significant breakthroughs in the fight for equality and inclusion. These movements were essential in addressing existing social inequalities (Borges & Steil, 2023). In this context, the legal and policy framework for people with

disabilities began to consolidate in the late 1980s. In 1989, the Coordination for the Integration of People with Disabilities (CORDE) was established by law (Brasil, 1989).

Social participation was institutionalized in policymaking in 1999, with the creation of the National Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CONADE). This body aims to ensure the implementation of national inclusion policies and functions as an advisory, deliberative, and parity-based body, with representatives from both the government and civil society (Brasil, 1999; Junior, 2010). CONADE bears a crucial role in social participation and public management for the inclusion of people with disabilities.

In the first decades of the 21st century, significant progress was achieved in the development of institutional capacities.

First, the inclusion of people with disabilities acquired visibility in key government planning instruments. One such example is the 2012-2015 Multi-Year Plan (PPA), which recognized disability policies as one of its cross-cutting agendas (Brasil, 2011), incorporating participatory monitoring mechanisms (Brasil, 2013). The “Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” Program assembled objectives under the responsibility of the Secretariat for Human Rights and the Ministry of Labor and Employment, covering areas such as employment quotas, rights guarantees, and accessibility.

In this context, the National Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, known as Living Without Limits Plan (Plano Viver sem Limite), was launched in 2011. It outlined measures in education, social inclusion, accessibility, and health, merging efforts from various ministries and reflecting the need for a broad and diversified approach (Brasil, 2011).

The most significant legal milestone in disability policy was established in 2015 through the Brazilian Law on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (LBI), also known as the Statute of Persons with Disabilities. The LBI systematizes guidelines and objectives for inclusion across sectors such as accessibility, health, education, labor, leisure, social assistance, communication,

and justice (Brasil, 2015), reflecting Brazil's commitments under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Social participation in disability policy was further strengthened through four editions of the National Conference on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, held in 2006, 2008, 2012, and 2016. These conferences emphasized the need for an integrated approach and highlighted the importance of social participation, with CONADE being recognized as a key coordinating body (Brasil, 2006; Brasil, 2023).

Despite these advancements, the trajectory of disability policies has not been linear. There have been discontinuities and setbacks, such as the National Policy on Equitable and Inclusive Special Education, introduced in 2020, which promoted the creation of specialized classes and schools, thereby reinforcing exclusion (Brasil, 2020). This policy was revoked in 2023, at the beginning of President Lula's third term (Brasil, 2023). In the same year, the National Secretariat for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SNDPD) was established within the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship (Brasil, 2023).

Additionally, after a seven-year hiatus, the Fifth National Conference on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was held in July 2024, addressing policies at federal, state, and municipal levels.

This overview highlights both the progress and challenges in implementing policies for the inclusion of people with disabilities in Brazil, emphasizing the importance of continuity and innovation in institutional and policy approaches. As noted by Gugliano, Mendes, and Stein (2020, p. 14), the development of public policies is challenging and requires the coordination of state-level measures across multiple dimensions. The effectiveness of these policies hinges on collaboration between government sectors, federative entities, and civil society (Guedes & Barbosa, 2020).

Intersectionality, federative coordination, and social participation and oversight are key to the success of these policies. These foundations are essential for the discussion on mainstreaming in public policies, which will be addressed in the next section.

3. TRANSVERSALITY AS AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH IN POLICIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Innovative practices in public administration are often associated with technology and communication, but they can also be understood more broadly, encompassing the introduction of some form of novelty to address a specific public challenge or problem in a given context (Spink, 2003; Farah, 2008; Cavalcante et al., 2017). Based on this, Cavalcante et al. (2017, p. 9) define innovation as “setting forth what is new into action, sparking incremental or radical changes as a result of human intentionality, usually stemming from a collective component”. Thus, innovation can entail shifts in priorities, new solutions to old problems, management methods, partnerships, and institutional designs.

Understanding social problems as wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973)—or complex and multifaceted—is an important innovation in public policy (Cavalcante et al., 2017; Cavalcante & Camões, 2017; Andion et al., 2020). Transversality emerges as an innovative approach to address these complex and contextual problems, which include disputes and negotiations over the best ways to face them. Since 2003, transversality has been more systematically applied in public policies in Brazil, particularly in areas such as women’s rights, human rights, youth, and racial equality (Silva, 2011; Marcondes et al., 2018).

Transversality is a strategy to reorient public policies, promoting intersectoral integration and the inclusion of historically discriminated groups. Although it is frequently associated with gender equality policies (Farah, 2004; Walby, 2005; Reinach, 2013), transversality can also be applied to policies for people with disabilities (Borges & Pereira, 2016; Borges & Steil, 2023). In this sense, transversality aims to integrate issues related to the inclusion of people with disabilities into all public policies and their management, ensuring that these issues are considered across government sectors, therefore not treated in isolation, but rather in an integrated way, in order to bring new perspectives to tackle ableism (Silva, 2011; Borges & Pereira, 2016; Borges & Steil, 2023; Lage, Lunardelli & Kawakami, 2023).

The transversal approach consists of incorporating new perspectives and values, reorienting them via political agendas of social movements, and developing institutional capacities (Marcondes & Farah, 2021). This last dimension is the focus of the present work.

Institutional capacities include the development of bodies and mechanisms that, when articulated, allow structured and participatory governance, covering both the conditions for intersectoral management of public policies (such as management bodies, plans, intersectoral coordination committees, etc.) and conditions for social participation (such as councils, conferences, public hearings, etc.) (Santos & Goés, 2018). Thus, these institutional capacities can promote state-society interactions that allow the transition from government to governance (Ancell & Torfing, 2014; Bichir et al., 2021).

Institutional capacities deepen transversality in terms of capillarity and sustainability. Capillarity means moving out of the “ghetto” or “political marginalization.” To achieve this, not only must there be management and social participation bodies, but they must also be articulated and have a strong presence in all public policy and governance processes.

Sustainability means strengthening this institutional framework, allowing it to exist beyond the political cycle that created it, ensuring that policy changes do not compromise its operation. Both capillarity and sustainability are crucial elements to ensure the conditions for the emergence of an innovation ecosystem (Andion, Alperstedt & Graeff, 2020) for transversality.

Transversality in public policies, therefore, promotes the inclusion of historically discriminated groups by integrating new perspectives and institutional frameworks. It entails co-creation between state actors and civil society, reinventing institutions to make them more permeable to the demands of these groups, which is vital for democratic experimentalism (Unger, 2011; C. Teixeira, 2010; Gasparido, 2018). Transversality is an innovative approach due to its holistic understanding of public problems and its integrative effects in promoting equality and inclusion (Unger, 2011; C. Teixeira, 2010; Gasparido, 2018).

4. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The aim of this article is to analyze the development of state policies for the inclusion of people with disabilities in Rio Grande do Norte from 2003 to 2023, focusing on the institutional capacities formally established for transversality in public policies, without addressing the state-society interaction that may emerge from them. It is assumed that the formalization of new institutional frameworks is crucial for fostering democratic experimentation and a social innovation ecosystem, aiming to address complex problems through integrated solutions. Although institutional capacities do not guarantee the implementation of transversality, they create favorable conditions for it, considering capillarity and sustainability.

This research is characterized as exploratory, qualitative, and descriptive. The focus is on the description and analysis of institutional conditions for the transversality of policies for people with disabilities over time, in the context of Rio Grande do Norte. The qualitative and exploratory approach allows a detailed and contextualized understanding of the development of these conditions.

The analysis is primarily documentary, using primary sources such as laws, decrees, and multi-year plans of Rio Grande do Norte between 2003 and 2023 (Figure 1). The choice for these official documents is due to the fact that they represent the formal establishment of institutional capacities.

Figure 1: Documents consulted for the analysis

PPAs			
PERIOD	PPA	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	STATE GOVERNMENT
2003 - 2010	PPA (2004 - 2007) PPA (2008 - 20011)	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (PT)	Wilma de Faria (PSB)
2011 - 2014	PPA (2012 - 2015)	Dilma Rousseff (PT)	Rosalba Ciarlini (DEM)
2015 - 2018	PPA (2016 - 2019)	Dilma Rousseff (PT) (2016); Michel Temer (MDB) (2016 a 2018)	Robinson Faria (PSD)
2019 - 2022	PPA (2020 - 2023)	Jair Bolsonaro (PL)	Fátima Bezerra (PT)

Laws, and Decrees	
Decree 9,938 of December 3, 1987	Creates the Coordination for the Integration of People with Disabilities.
Decree 18,886 of February 13, 2006	Calls the First State Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the State of Rio Grande do Norte.
Decree 20,614 of July 9, 2008	Calls the Second State Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the State of Rio Grande do Norte.
Decree 22,630 of April 4, 2012	Calls the Third State Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the State of Rio Grande do Norte.
Decree 25,507 of September 15, 2015	Calls the Fourth State Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the State of Rio Grande do Norte.
Law No. 8,482 of January 28, 2004	Creates the State Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities - COEDE, and provides other provisions.
Complementary Law No. 300 of July 8, 2005	Establishes the State Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities (COEDE), within the State Secretariat for Labor, Housing, and Social Assistance (SETHAS), repeals State Law No. 8,482 of January 28, 2004, and provides other provisions.
Complementary Law No. 649 of May 10, 2019	Provides for the reorganization of the Executive Power of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, amends State Complementary Law No. 163 of February 5, 1999, and provides other provisions.

The complementarity of institutional capacity documents through the analysis of the Pluriannual Plan (PPA) is justified, as it is a strategic planning tool within public administration. The PPA establishes guidelines, objectives, and goals for public administration over a four-year period, and its analysis can reveal trends in the prioritization of government policies (Giacomoni, 2022).

In Brazil, the PPA is organized into programs, which correspond to measures directed towards specific objectives and goals, aimed at government bodies or entities (Giacomoni, 2022). Analyzing the PPA allows identifying the extent of the capillarity of transversal policies, highlighting whether the rights of people with disabilities are integrated transversally into the programs that structure public policies and whether the guidelines established in normative frameworks are being translated into concrete measures.

The temporal delimitation of the research is justified by the fact that transversal policies are a dynamic process, including both progress and discontinuities. The year 2003 is considered a relevant starting point, as it was

when transversal policies began to become relevant in the structuring of public policies in Brazil (Reinach, 2013), influencing also the states and municipalities.

The choice to analyze state-level experiences, focusing on Rio Grande do Norte, stems from the fact that the analysis of innovative frameworks and transversal policies tends to prioritize national or local experiences. However, the state level is relevant, and it is necessary to address the challenge in which states are often theoretically and practically understood as a "lost link" in the policy architecture of federalism (Souza, 2023).

Additionally, it is important to value the knowledge and practices stemming from regions such as the North and Northeast, as regions such as the South and Southeast tend to be more valued in the search for innovative practices. However, it is understood that a state in the Northeast can be an important locus for systematizing experiences, and scientific knowledge can benefit from learning about the experiences stemming from the Northeast region.

5. TRANSVERSALITY IN POLICIES FOR THE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN RIO GRANDE DO NORTE (2003 - 2023)

To present the description of the results found, the data was organized into a four-act periodization, entailing the different state administrations that occurred during the analyzed period.

5.1. *Wilma de Faria Government (2003 - 2010)*

The study begins the analysis with the administration of Wilma de Faria, from the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), a center-left party, which was aligned with the federal administration of the Workers' Party (PT), which occurred concurrently (2003 to 2009). During this period, the federal PT government promoted the approach of transversality.

Prior to this administration, there was already an institution in Rio Grande do Norte (RN) focused on policies for people with disabilities, the Sub-coordinating Office for the Integration of People with Disabilities (CORDE), created in 1987, also within the context of democratization. CORDE was

essential for promoting initiatives to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in public policies within the state, bearing a key role in creating institutional conditions for transversality.

Wilma's administration created and strengthened important institutions, such as the State Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities (COEDE) in 2004 (Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2005), and promoted state conferences (I and II) in 2006 and 2008 (Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2006; Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2008). Conferences are crucial for strengthening participation in the management of transversality, but they are driven by the federal government, with the state conference being one of the steps in the process, which does not necessarily leave a legacy for policies at the sub-national level.

Despite these initiatives, the PPA (2004 - 2007) showed limitations in the capillarity of transversality. The only measure foreseen was the revision of the Continuous Cash Benefit (BPC), already established by the Organic Law of Social Assistance (LOAS) of 1993. Furthermore, no mention of transversality for people with disabilities was found in the PPA (Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2003), indicating that it was not a strategy mobilized by the government for the structuring of this policy.

The measures of the PPA (2008 - 2011) for people with disabilities were primarily focused on conducting studies, research surveys, and awareness campaigns, which are important measures for supporting public policies with evidence but which lack a strategic character and do not signal the capillarity of transversality. In this PPA, there was mention of transversality, but in a more theoretical manner, not directly related to social groups such as people with disabilities, elderly people, women, LGBTI+, etc. (Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2007).

In summary, during this period, relevant initiatives were established for social participation in the analyzed policy, creating conditions to expand the capillarity and sustainability of transversality through the mobilization of civil society. However, no evidence was found of the prioritization of this policy or the strengthening of these institutional conditions within the PPA. Neither were

identified instruments that would allow a more systemic management of this transversality, such as a state policy or plan, or a structured program focused on people with disabilities.

5.2. Rosalba Ciarlini Government (2011 - 2014)

The administration of Rosalba Ciarlini represented a shift in political direction at the state level, as the governor was elected by the then-Democratic Party (DEM), a right-wing party. During this period, President Dilma Rousseff governed the country under the Workers' Party (PT). Therefore, there was a lack of political alignment between the two levels of government, which may have contributed to a reduced connection between state and federal policies. It is notable that during this time, the federal government launched the "Viver Sem Limites" (Living Without Limits) Plan (2011), but it did not have any significant impact on disability policies in Rio Grande do Norte.

This period represented a stagnation in policies for people with disabilities. The III State Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities was the only relevant initiative during this time, and it was driven by the federal government. The PPA (2012 - 2015) did not include specific initiatives for people with disabilities—it referred to human rights in a more general way, nor did it mention transversality (Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2011).

In summary, there was no continuity in the gradual advancements of the previous period in the trajectory of the policy under study, nor was there alignment with federal advancements, both in terms of initiative formulation and of the transversal management of disability policies. Therefore, the capillarity of this policy was not reinforced, which also weakened its sustainability, both due to the inflection in the trajectory and the missed opportunity to join the process driven by the federal government.

5.3. Robinson Faria Government (2015 - 2018)

The administration of Robinson Faria was elected with a broad coalition, from center to left. The governor was part of the Social Democratic Party (PSD),

a centrist party, but left-wing parties, such as PT and PCdoB, were also part of his government. Initially, the administration was closer to then-President Dilma Rousseff (PT). However, in the context of the coup/impeachment of the president and the beginning of Michel Temer's government, from the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), in 2016, the state governor distanced himself from PT and aligned with the new government. Therefore, his administration was marked by discontinuities over the four years.

During this period, there were no advancements in institutional capacities for the transversality of disability policies; no new mechanisms were created to ensure the social participation of people with disabilities. As a result, the administration only maintained what already existed.

The PPA, drafted at the beginning of the administration, planned to hold two state conferences on the rights of people with disabilities during this period (Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2015), but these conferences were never held.

An advancement in the PPA (2016 - 2019) was the definition of transversal agendas, which, however, were limited to policies for women and youth, without including policies for people with disabilities (Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2015), which undermined the mobilization of this strategy within the policy.

During the analyzed period, there were no advancements in terms of the formally established institutional framework for the transversality of disability policies, which remained marked by isolated, non-structural initiatives, and therefore lacked capillarity or sustainability.

5.4. *Fátima Bezerra Government (2019 - 2023)*

During the period in which Fátima Bezerra worked as state governor, in her first term (the governor was reelected in 2023), Jair Bolsonaro, from the far-right, was the President of the Republic, which represented a notable political misalignment. Disability policies at the federal level did not see advancements in their structuring, but at the state level, there were important initiatives.

Despite lacking the political support of the federal government, the state administration made progress in institutional capacity for disability policies. With the creation of the Secretariat of State for Women, Youth, Racial Equality, and Human Rights (SEMJIDH) in 2019, the CORDE, which until then had been a subcoordinator, became the Coordinating Body for the Rights of People with Disabilities, now integrated into SEMJIDH (Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2020). However, its institutional status remained low, differing from other so-called transversal policies, such as those for women and youth, which became sub-secretariats.

Another significant milestone achieved during this period was the integration of COEDE into SEMJIDH. COEDE is an important mechanism for articulating the social participation of people with disabilities and managing the transversality of disability policies, with the participation of representatives from various segments of society, which is crucial for the democratization of transversal governance. Currently, the council consists of 12 members, with equal participation from the government and civil society (Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2023).

In the PPA (2020 - 2023), disability policies became part of the transversal agendas, defined as documents that encompass all governmental measures related to transversality. It established the “Equality in Diversity” program, which covers policies for women, people with disabilities, the LGBTQIA+ community, youth, racial equality, and others.

Additionally, a relevant factor is that the aforementioned PPA program aims to conduct measures that ensure the social participation of people with disabilities. Initiatives include creating partnerships with federal agencies, coordinating the training of civil servants and civil society in the promotion and defense of rights, and organizing public policies through communication campaigns to ensure the rights of these social groups (Government of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, 2019). However, these measures are modest.

In summary, during this period, there were some advancements in disability policies, including strengthening institutional capacities for transversality, the inclusion of the policy as a transversal agenda in the PPA,

and the establishment of a program that incorporates the issue. However, more systemic or integrated initiatives were not identified that could hint at a social innovation ecosystem (Andion, Alperstedt & Graeff, 2020) for transversality in relation to people with disabilities. Looking at what was established or planned, it was not identified, throughout the trajectory of the analyzed policy, institutional conditions to sustain a movement of transversality shifting from the margins to the center.

Next, a summary of the main milestones for the development of institutional capacities for disability policies in RN, the year they occurred, and which administration they refer to is presented (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Contextualization of the RN Governments from 2003 to 2023

Period	State Government	Year of Occurrence	Reference Milestones of Institutional Capacities for Disability Policies in RN
2003 - 2010	Wilma de Faria (PSB)	2004	Creation of the State Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities (COEDE).
		2006	Holding of the 1st State Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
		2008	Holding of the 2nd State Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
2011 - 2014	Rosalba Ciarlini (DEM)	2012	Holding of the 3rd State Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
2015 - 2018	Robinson Faria (PSD)	2015	Holding of the 4th State Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities.
2019 - 2023	Fátima Bezerra (PT)	2019	Institution of the Coordination for the Promotion and Advocacy of the Rights of People with Disabilities within SEMJIDH.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Policies for the inclusion of people with disabilities require a (re)orientation and (re)organization to ensure their inclusion in all sectors of public policy and society. The strategy of transversal policies for the inclusion of

people with disabilities aims in this direction. To strengthen this strategy, it is important to build institutional capacities for transversal policies through governance and social participation mechanisms that, when articulated, allow the co-creation of public policies in a systematic manner, driving an ecosystem of social innovation for transversal inclusion. Thus, transversal policies emerge as an innovative alternative for democratic experimentation, incorporating new ideas and perspectives for the inclusion of historically discriminated groups, which is crucial for ensuring that new institutional frameworks contribute to the democratization of the state.

Between this proposal and what was observed in the trajectory of disability policies in Rio Grande do Norte (2003-2023), a significant gap was found. Despite the long-standing struggle for the inclusion of people with disabilities, the present analysis reveals limited progress combined with discontinuities and persistent challenges.

Indeed, there were specific advancements during Wilma de Faria's administration, while in the two subsequent administrations (Rosalba Ciarlini and Robinson Faria), neither relevant initiatives nor visibility for the topic were identified. Only during Fátima Bezerra's administration did the issue regain some importance, with the transformation of CORDE into the Coordination for the Rights of People with Disabilities, the return of the discussion about the social participation of people with disabilities, and the inclusion of the issue in the transversal agendas of the PPA. Still, these are modest advancements.

In relation to the trajectory of state policies in the context of the national scenario, some effects of federal government induction when there was greater political-ideological alignment between federal and state administrations were identified.

Even though it could be suggested that the left-wing administrations had more sensitivity to the issue, the truth is that even within these administrations, the formally established institutional capacities for the transversal inclusion of people with disabilities remained weak and marked by isolated initiatives. This did not ensure the reach of transversal inclusion, partly because no prioritization of the issue in any of the administrations was identified. This places the

inclusion of people with disabilities in a marginal position, without the centrality needed to drive new democratic experiments and a deeper change in the existing institutional framework.

Furthermore, linking transversal inclusion to specific political cycles without continuity is problematic for building a trajectory of sustainability that would allow for strengthening institutional capacities for democratic governance. Thus, considering both the reach and sustainability, even traces of a social innovation ecosystem were identified (Andion et al., 2020) for the formally established policies for people with disabilities in Rio Grande do Norte during the analyzed period.

This research has limitations that should be noted. The first lies in its focus on formulation and what was formally established, without addressing implementation aspects or socio-state interactions. Due to this focus, the research relied on documents that provide the official discourse, which does not capture the voice of social movements. It is also important to note that, as a symptom of the fragility of the analyzed policy, these official documents are scarce and difficult to access, which also limits the corpus of the analysis but also becomes data about this weakness in the institutional capacities analyzed. In this sense, future research could focus on the role of social movements in their interaction with these institutional frameworks.

Through this article, the authors aimed to systematize knowledge about a practical experience of transversal inclusion of people with disabilities in public policies, focusing on its institutional capacities. It is hoped that this work will provide an empirical contribution and could have practical value in supporting the development of policies for people with disabilities in Rio Grande do Norte and other locations. It is also hoped that reflecting on institutional capacities for transversal policies, and their dimensions of reach and sustainability, can lead to further research on the topic, which is still not as common as necessary for transversal policies to effectively be at the heart of democratic experiments, driving a robust and vibrant social innovation ecosystem.

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