

Inclusive Intergenerational Experiences With Elderly and Minor People: A New Horizon for Inclusion?

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The research presents the progressive increase of lifelong education and its influence on the paradigm of socio-educational inclusion. Today's society is characterized by its increasing aspiration and demand for activities of social promotion and personal development, that is, activities that tend to reinforce the social fabric in its human and community values, in the elimination of loneliness, or increasing the quality of life, through the full enjoyment of civic rights, common cultural property, or participation in the opportunities offered by public and community life. The older population has transformed their habits, integrating new values generated by social changes. In turn, it leads to possible changes in social intervention. These include training, leisure, tourism, social skills development, the use of the Internet as a tool for knowledge and communication, and social participation. These new social behaviors can be an opportunity to build a more cohesive and supportive society, without generational breaches. And this line, the attention to diversity and its even processes seeks to expand its reach, generating intergenerational spaces.

Keywords: education, lifelong learning, inclusion, intergenerational approach, competences, active and co-responsible citizenship

Introduction

Fortunately, there are currently national and international legislative frameworks that guarantee the right to education. For reasons of space, it is not deepened in them, but following Federighi, P. (2013), the right to education is recognized for all people, in the different stages of life. However, the observation of everyday events shows that it is not easy to make it a reality for the elderly or those that are considered inactive.

Adulthood and Intergenerational Inequality

Subjects of the future, active protagonists, willing to redefine themselves by their ability to be mentally open to new experiences, changes and opportunities that can develop them themselves "(Escotorin and Roche, 2011, p. 18).

The concept of adult centrism is to explain relations of inequality that place children in socially disadvantaged positions. Although there is no oneness in the concept, it refers to an asymmetric and hegemonic relationship between adults and minors, where social order and socio-political priorities are established based on perceptions, demands, needs, and adult interests, without taking into account or not contemplating other

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collectives also necessary for societies and those that also affect decisions. This hegemony of adults could also transcend the more long-lived collectives that are no longer as useful as “labor capital”. This feeds models the exclusion of certain groups of different ages, from the lack of respect and the effective non-enjoyment of their rights. They serve as evidences, the necessity to enable special world days proclaimed by the United Nations to promote the Rights of the Child (November 20) or the World Day of awareness of abuse and mistreatment to old age (June 15). Some countries have gone further, as in the case of Ecuador, implementing policies for Equality between generations, through its National Council for Intergenerational Equality or its National Agenda for Intergenerational Equality 2013-2017.

On the other hand, at a demographic level, each time we have older populations, but not for that reason dependent, but as active as entrepreneurs, demanding learning, wanting to participate in public and formative life to become protagonists of social transformations or their own welfare. And in response to this, the educational and socio-cultural entities are satisfying these new cognitive or socio-educational intervention demands centered on leisure activities, intellectual stimulation, personal development, empowerment, integration, volunteering, social entrepreneurship, etc.

Lifelong Learning in the Intergenerational Approach

Learning designates the ways and modalities according to which a subject learns, that is, acquires a competence (knowing, knowing how to do, knowing how to be, even knowing how to live together) that he did not possess until then.

According to Moragas (1991), learning can take place at any age. The ability to learn does not automatically decrease as the years increase. The most important thing is that the stimulus, motivation, and rhythm are put into practice with an adequate methodology.

Every person, at any stage of their life, must have permanent learning opportunities, in order to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to realize their aspirations and/or contribute to society.

Every education system is designed to facilitate learning throughout life, and the creation of formal, non-formal, and informal learning opportunities for people of all ages. The concept of lifelong learning requires a change of model that takes us away from the ideas of teaching and training, and brings us closer to those of learning, of a transmitting instruction of knowledge to a learning for personal development, and from an acquisition of special skills to a discovery of a broader spectrum and the liberation and mastery of the creative potential. This change is necessary at all levels and in all forms of education, in formal as well as non-formal and informal education. (UNESCO Education Strategy, 2014-2021)

A change from which our working hypothesis emerges:

Competencies Linked to Lifelong Learning

Education throughout life is one that comprises from our beginnings until the end of our days a continuous process of new knowledge learned and assimilated. The main objective of permanent education is to get people to be able to participate actively in social life from a critical consciousness and in different circumstances.

Taking the previous definition as reference, the inclusion of people, that is, the ability to decide and act freely, is a principle from which criteria related to the denial of procedures favoring their manipulation are derived.

From these principles are derived criteria as important as the educational spaces should be conceived as an open resource to the community and coordinated with the set of community resources. In this sense, it is considered fundamental and proposed, the application of key competences through the various educational and

training environments, through lifelong learning, highlighting as appropriate education and training frameworks:

- (1) Education for/with all and all ages;
- (2) Specific education for groups at risk of social exclusion;
- (3) Educational provision for students with educational needs.

From the key competences, a multifunctional and transferable package of knowledge, skills, and attitudes is represented, which all individuals need for their fulfillment and personal and social development, inclusion, welfare, and employment.

The skills of the people reinforce the need to defend the social inclusion of the elderly that is, the importance of these remaining integrated in the community, as well as the promotion of intergenerational solidarity. In this sense, it is considered essential to take into account the following competences linked to lifelong learning.

(1) Promote programs and experiences of generational exchange, designed to create spaces and strategies for meeting generations, to contribute to the approach, and respect for different stages of life, recognizing the importance of the elderly in the transmission of values and essential life experiences for the new generations;

(2) Promote volunteer projects, designed to channel the free time and experience of older people through their incorporation into groups of citizens who in an altruistic way offer solidarity support to other members, groups, or institutions of the municipality;

(3) Develop, in coordination with other community resources, cultural and educational programs, broad and up-to-date, that contemplate topics of interest (cultural, educational, socio-political, artistic, etc.) for all the elderly.

All the above mentioned invite to rethink the following questions:

(1) Is it relevant to rethink and broaden the concept of inclusion to respond to the new needs arising from the concept of lifelong learning?

(2) Is it recommended that inclusive educational processes, whether formal or non-formal, be addressed from the intergenerational approach and key competences in order to guarantee equal opportunities?

(3) To ensure attention to diversity and social inclusion of all people, is it wise to bet on respect and intergenerational equality?

(4) Should educational institutions and processes linked to attention to diversity incorporate content be related to education with respect and intergenerational equality, incorporating inclusive spaces of exchange between minors and adults?

Objectives

(1) Carry out a first approximation to real good practices that use the skills linked to lifelong learning and spaces for generational exchange, to develop inclusive practices of equality and intergenerational respect;

(2) Detect the first qualitative criteria that characterize these practices as inclusive, intergenerational and linked to lifelong learning, in order to continue research in later phases.

Development of Practice/Experience

The experience at this moment is to carry out a first mapping to make visible those first good practices found in the regional, national, or international context focused on generating intergenerational inclusive

teaching-learning processes, where the participants are people of different ages, especially older people.

First Evidence Found

Locally

The City of Alcobendas makes available to the elderly an extensive program of training, intergenerational and volunteer activities where these citizens can expand or acquire new skills, continuing as active citizens and co-responsible, or energizing themselves, activities for others people (children, adults etc.) or, doing various volunteering linked to the improvement of social welfare (road volunteers, children's activities in celebration of the World Day of children's rights or cultural activities in schools), as well as support to associative activities where the elderly offer cultural activities to the citizens.

The Intergenerational Solidarity Network is an ONG (www.red-solidaria.org) for people over 50, with the purpose of helping older people to collaborate as volunteers in educational activities and social cooperation. Its mission is to promote intergenerational solidarity through joint work between adults and minors

At the Regional Level

For the Provincial Council of Bizkaia and its guide "Towards an intergenerational society: How to promote programs for all ages", intergenerationality is shown as an opportunity for the exploitation that all people are, a means for individuals to learn about of others, while promoting civic values, participation, generational exchange, respect, and intergenerational solidarity.

At the National Level

In 2010, IMSERSO published the publication "Intergenerational Programs. Introductory Guide", by the authors Sánchez, Kaplan, and Sáez. A facilitating document for those professionals who intended to do reflective work on intergenerational programs, offering reasons, rationale, and recommendations about the need for these programs in the new societies of the 21st century, recommendations for their approach. In correlation with the objectives of this article, explaining the guide that through intergenerational programs is intended to emphasize what generations can contribute to each other. These programs are means for the creation of spaces of encounter and reciprocal exchange; in short, the construction of fairer, more integrated and solidary societies are proposed (2010, pp. 15-17).

On an International Level

The National Agenda for Intergenerational Equality of Ecuador 2013-2017, of the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, employs a systemic and co-responsible social approach based on good treatment and non-discrimination based on age, with the purpose of generating a state of more inclusive and egalitarian welfare.

Conclusion

The research presents the progressive increase of education throughout life and its influence on the paradigm of socio-educational inclusion. The society of today is characterized by its growing aspiration and demand for activities of social promotion and personal development, that is, activities that tend to reinforce the social fabric in their human and community values, in the elimination of loneliness, or increasing the quality of life, through the full enjoyment of civic rights, common cultural assets, or participation in the opportunities offered by public and community life. The older population has transformed their habits, integrating in turn

new values generated by social changes. In turn, it leads to possible changes in social intervention. Among them we can mention training, leisure, tourism, the development of social skills, the use of the Internet as a tool for knowledge and communication, and social participation. These new social behaviors can be an opportunity to build a more cohesive and solidary society, without generational gaps. And this line, the attention to diversity and its inclusive processes seeks to expand its reach, generating intergenerational spaces.

During all the decades, people have been acquiring knowledge, abilities, and skills; With the increase in population, education stopped having only one site dedicated to children and opened up as a fan, covering all ages of life.

Education throughout life is at the same time a social necessity and a right for all. Multiple learning opportunities and acquisition of new skills and abilities must be given, which contributes to improving positive attitudes of coexistence, solidarity, participation, and creativity in all people.

In agreement with the Delors Report, education contains a treasure understood as: an opportunity for exchange and generational coexistence, if inclusive spaces are created where the elderly and the minors can contribute to each other.

Some early evidences have been shown, which can reveal the importance of generating integrative and inclusive intergenerational educational spaces, as well as the justification of their reason for being.

Intergenerational initiatives come from different areas: municipal, associative fabric, public institutions, or even state policies, but all of them converge in responding to the new socio-educational, formative, and cohesive needs demanded by 21st century societies, as well as favoring the construction of a more active and co-responsible citizenship.

New lines of research are opened: to know the social and personal impact that these inclusive intergenerational teaching and learning experiences have had for their participants and their communities; to delve into a more exhaustive mapping from which qualitative and quantitative data can be obtained in order to show how intergenerational inclusion is already a demanded and necessary fact in our society.

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