The training of actors based on university social responsibility

La formación de actores en función de la responsabilidad social universitaria

Formação de atores com base na responsabilidade social universitária

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ABSTRACT

The article presents the main results of the implementation of training actions in the community context, carried out by actors from the University of Pinar del Río, "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". This institution has a commitment with the communities of the territory, preparing professionals capable of facilitating and enriching their cultural life through the performance of their leaders and the active participation of the population in their development. The objective of this study was to implement a proposal of actions aimed at training actors in terms of university social responsibility in the community context. Different materials and methods were used that started from an integral materialistic dialectic approach; among them, the historical-logical method and the systemic-structural, ethnographic method, with two of its techniques: the discussion group and the participant observation. As empirical methods, the participatory community diagnosis and the interview. As a result, a proposal of training actions was elaborated, in which the protagonism of both social actors was promoted: those of the

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university and those of the community context, as leaders in function of their social responsibility towards the community. The experience provided allowed the researchers of the University of Pinar del Río, involved in the research, to contribute with a group of training actions that should be taken into account when applying similar experiences.

Keywords: community; training; social actors; social responsibility; social transformation

RESUMEN

El artículo presenta los principales resultados de la implementación de acciones formativas en el contexto comunitario, llevadas a cabo por actores de la Universidad de Pinar del Río, "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Esta institución tiene un compromiso con las comunidades del territorio, prepara a profesionales capaces de facilitar y enriquecer su vida cultural a través del desempeño de sus líderes y la participación activa de la población en su desarrollo. El objetivo de este estudio estuvo dirigido a implementar una propuesta de acciones encaminadas a la formación de actores en función de la responsabilidad social universitaria en el contexto comunitario. Se emplearon diferentes materiales y métodos que partieron de un enfoque dialéctico materialista integral; dentro de ellos, el método histórico-lógico y el sistémico-estructural, el etnográfico, con dos de sus técnicas: el grupo de discusión y la observación participante. Como métodos empíricos, el diagnóstico comunitario participativo y la entrevista. Como resultado, se elaboró una propuesta de acciones formativas, en las que se potenció el protagonismo de ambos actores sociales: los de la universidad y los del contexto comunitario, como líderes en función de su responsabilidad social hacia la comunidad. La experiencia aportada permitió a los investigadores de la Universidad de Pinar del Río, implicados en la investigación, aportar un grupo de acciones de formación que deben tenerse en cuenta al aplicar experiencias similares.

Palabras clave: comunidad; formación; actores sociales; responsabilidad social; transformación social

RESUMO

O artigo apresenta os principais resultados da implementação de ações de formação no contexto comunitário, realizadas por atores da Universidade de Pinar del Río, "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Esta instituição tem um compromisso com as comunidades do território, preparando profissionais capazes de facilitar e enriquecer sua vida cultural através da atuação de seus líderes e da participação ativa da população em seu desenvolvimento. O objetivo deste estudo foi implementar uma proposta de ações voltadas à formação de atores em termos de responsabilidade social universitária no contexto comunitário. Foram utilizados diferentes materiais e métodos que partiram de uma abordagem dialética materialista integral; entre eles, o método histórico-lógico e o método sistêmico-estrutural, etnográfico, com duas de suas técnicas: o grupo de discussão e a observação dos participantes. Como métodos empíricos, o diagnóstico participativo da comunidade e a entrevista. Como resultado, foi elaborada uma proposta

de ações de formação, na qual se promoveu o protagonismo de ambos os atores sociais: os da universidade e os do contexto comunitário, como líderes em função da sua responsabilidade social para com a comunidade. A experiência proporcionada permitiu aos investigadores da Universidade de Pinar del Río, envolvidos na investigação, contribuir com um grupo de ações de formação que devem ser tidas em conta na aplicação de experiências semelhantes.

Palavras-chave: comunidade; formação; atores sociais; responsabilidade social; transformação social

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the concept of social responsibility has become very important, and there is clear evidence that the concept has evolved considerably. The interest of researchers in elements such as: communities, leaders and training, powerfully calls the attention of those who guide their professional work in social areas. The diversity of conceptions ranges from an economic to a purely social vision. Social responsibility, as an unobjectionable task for all organizations today, is an essential indicator.

The university is an institution in which the concept of social responsibility has been at the center of debate among its researchers. In the dizzying world of the 21st century, the university has a scenario of transformation in every sense.

Rodolfo Alarcón Ortiz, in the XIII International Congress of University Extension, reaffirmed the fact that "university institutions face important challenges" (Alarcón Ortiz, 2015).

In the system of university-society interactions, an essential purpose is the promotion of culture in the university and its environment, as well as the relationship between extension and social responsibility of the university, taking into account "(...) to perfect the extension's process and its management in order to achieve superior results, so that this puts them in a position to strengthen all the mechanisms that drive it in a complex scenario such as the one that is revealed today in the region, concluding that from more difficult moments the extension has been victorious and that to the extent that it is more relevant it will achieve the impacts that are required today" (González González & González Fernández-Larrea, 2019).

For its part, the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 establishes a transformative vision towards economic, social and environmental sustainability, signed by the 193 member states as a reference guide for the work of the institution until that date and includes, among its objectives, an "inclusive, equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities (...) as the basis for improving people's lives and sustainable development" (ONU, 2015, p. 15).

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Valdés and Villegas (2017) establish a relationship between the main indicators of University Social Responsibility (USR) and some essential attributes of the organizational culture.

Núñez and Bermúdez (2019) argue that the changes in approaches, scenarios, content and methods demanded of education require what they call "extension's actions" and their management based on University Social Responsibility. Vallaeys (2007), on the other hand, understands it as an organizational base, essential for the exercise of good practices in the institutions that assume it as one of their tactical values.

Castro, Almuiñas and Borroto (2018) express that, between social responsibility and the community context, the community is the first aspect to take into account. This makes it possible to understand that community work is the way in which communities develop, that significant changes take place within them, and that it is seen as the main way in which people develop, as well as an alternative to improve their conditions in which community and participation are an essential point.

In community participation, their leaders constitute key personal components. The relationships that take place within them, based on cultural aspects, interests and needs, encourage interactions between the community and external actors, that is, it is their leaders who encourage the entry of other actors into their space.

In the case of social responsibility, decision making has much to do with the potential that may arise among community actors, their leaders and those who have the possibility of accessing their spaces for the realization of state or institutional initiatives, since decision making must arise from the community framework; such a perspective induces thinking about the need for training of these and the potential of the university in this sense.

Hence the importance of considering elements of a training process for social actors and community leaders in order to promote university social responsibility, depending on their actions in the groups or communities in which they intend to intervene.

"The social function of the Cuban university, to form citizens capable of promoting culture in any environment where they interact as actors of social transformation, with participation and identity and with a final objective in the benefit of society, in the understanding and dialogue of knowledge, necessarily implies an active position as actors of transformation" (Rovira Álvarez & López Calichs, 2017).

Other scholars of the subject such as Antonio, Fanfa and Pinto (2018) reaffirm the fact that "the development of the Institution transcends the constructions that have been built over the years, it is equally manifested in the transformation of culture, knowledge, the conditions of training of people who have had access to higher education and the conditions of improvement of the quality of people's personal and professional lives" (p. 305).

Montalvo, Villanueva, Armenteros, Gómez and Cervantes (2017) consider that "social participation evidences the activity of social innovation that is developed in educational

institutions; it is necessary to reflect on its objectives within the function of the university as a generator and disseminator of knowledge, which is oriented to implement innovative actions of transfer and assimilation of this knowledge by the communities and local organizations that impact the economic, social and environmental development of the region and the country" (p. 108).

The vision expresses the expectations, the desires of the academic community and of society in relation to a desirable and possible future for the institution. To do this, USR needs to be inclusive, inspiring and innovative.

In the case of USR, actions should be closely linked to a commitment to social and community welfare. It is at this point that the proposal's actions are developed, specifically aimed at training community actors. These elements allow us to offer as an objective of this work: to implement a proposal of actions aimed at the training of actors based on university social responsibility.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To obtain the results of this research, different methods were used, which start from a comprehensive dialectical-materialistic approach, which allowed to highlight the contradictory and developing character of the relationships between the components of the research field, channeling the research to the search for new regularities, functions and structures in USR.

The historical-logical method was used to understand the evolution of USR as a studied process, as well as its fundamental historical connections, the general laws of its functioning and development, which allowed the determination of the universal tendencies that reveal essential aspects of this phenomenon.

For its part, the systemic-structural method made it possible to determine the relevant training actions for that context, their relationships, structure and general design.

From the qualitative methodology, the ethnographic method was used, with the aim of interpreting the behaviors, customs and lifestyles of the members of the community where the actions were implemented. The participant observation, as a technique, allowed the researchers to witness community activities, meetings and neighborhood debates, where, through the discussion group, as another of the techniques used, the debate and controversy between both actors was established: those of the community and those of the university.

The participatory community diagnosis, as an empirical method, made it possible for community members to identify their main training needs and be active in the search for solutions, together with the university researchers as a team. The interview brought this study closer to the criteria of the main formal community leaders and the information obtained was corroborated with the application of other techniques.

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The research universe was constituted by community actors from the Circumscription No.3 of the Popular Council "Carlos Manuel", from the municipality of Pinar del Río where, in addition, the University is located. For that reason, the population was constituted by 139 people, while the sample was conformed by 50 ones that represent 36% of the population. The sampling was of a random stratified type. The people were chosen at random. In the case of the directors, the sample was non-probabilistic and intentional and those directors whose administrative position determined a direct participation in the management of processes, in the community of the Popular Council "Carlos Manuel", were selected. Based on the statistical calculation of the sample, it is considered to be representative of the population, if it is a fraction of the size of the population; each unit of analysis carries the same features and a random choice is made.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

University Social Responsibility in terms of the community

University social responsibility is closely related to the participation of all actors in the community context. The above statement is a tribute to the fact that the actions, which are carried out, have an impact and relations are established with socio-cultural institutions in a harmonious way, so that the proposals, based on the interaction of a series of institutions and organizations that exist in the community, constitute an active and transforming process in which the community actors themselves help to modify the environment.

Rojas, González and Martínez (2018) express that the university has an irrevocable commitment to the society in which it operates because it is part of it. A commitment that must be reflected in constant action to improve the aspects, not only of the intra-university community, but also of that which surrounds it, the extra-university.

In this regard, there have been difficulties that limit the scope of the university's community work due to the insufficient management in this type of work, not only of the formal leaders but also of many of the professionals who are incorporated in these activities.

The emphasis on community work, promotion, animation, research, programming, project management, teaching and cultural extension of the University, should keep in mind that each of the professionals who intend to make a scientific and comprehensive interpretation of the reality of a community, should not ignore the social agents such as government agencies, cultural and educational institutions, political and mass organizations and other entities of interest, as well as the leaders.

This aspect allows, in a better way, the identification and development of the community's potential, the development of its artists, intellectuals and creators, cultural promoters, art instructors, social workers, etc.

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In community work, organizations play an important role since, on the guidelines that they establish, the socio-cultural development that the context can achieve depends to a great extent. This development requires the careful coordination of institutions and organizations that are concerned with both directing policy at the community level and implementing projects.

It is a matter of providing their leaders with the tools that allow them to choose the most appropriate development pattern for their particular community conditions. The scope of the university in terms of the development of university social responsibility must favor the rescue of the protagonist value of its actors (leaders and groups) for the benefit of the common good. In this sense, in order to develop any initiative involving a given community, it is essential to train actors in terms of USR.

In the case of the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca", the lack of preparation of the actors, together with the lack of motivation and the scarce support of some local institutions, have prevented the realization of the community work, even though the university has human resources for it.

In the different faculties of the center, projects have been generated outside the university with the aim of strengthening the university-society link, which have not come to fruition, specifically due to insufficient coordination between both actors, those of the university and those of the community.

It is also valid to delimit that these projects, which are impelled for the community, do not move within a strategy of local, integrated development, but that they exist without articulating between them. Each one carries out isolated actions and there is no consensus to develop community work.

That is why it can be said that there are inconsistencies that manifest themselves in the actions of the different university actors.

There is a certain tendency to divide up the institutions, based on different programs that act simultaneously in the community, but they do not manage to establish the corresponding links between the actions that converge on the same end.

In general terms, the university presence in the communities is very limited and, in some cases, non-existent, which causes some mistrust of the presence of university teams in some communities. There is a risk of generating rejection in the population, through the intervention of university students in the search for solutions to community problems or, in the least of cases, collaboration is minimal, which also makes it difficult to develop shared experiences.

In order to fulfill their social function, organizations must promote, design and implement strategies for change in accordance with the possibilities and realities to foster community development, improve the functioning of the community and meet the needs of the people. Community organizations and institutions are responsible for organizing, training, raising awareness and mobilizing the population to the complex tasks they

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require for the common good; this implies the close relationship that must exist between all the actors involved and their commitment to USR.

The actions designed to solve the difficulties, from and with the community, should start from the hierarchization of the problems, taking into account the opinion of the population, to later solve them through action plans, based on the community itself and the existing resources.

These considerations are vital for the community's functioning, since they raise the community's protagonism in the process of the social movement; the legitimacy of this increases the efficiency of the State and of the organizations in all the fields of human activity.

All this presupposes a two-way interrelation of all the organizations and institutions at the community level or, what is the same, an interdependent and related action of all of them and, therefore, the not realization of isolated activities, but integrated, approved and conformed by all, where the coordination of the actions becomes a requirement to achieve a high efficiency in the operation of the community, which does not mean to walk together, but that each one assumes his tasks from the position that corresponds to him with a common objective: The coordination and cooperation of all.

Proposal for actions to train actors on USR

The proposed actions allowed the joint participation of both actors, based on the empowerment of the resources available in this context, aimed at improving the quality of life and promoting exchange between the university and the community. The proposed actions are based on a position of ethical character, include respect for people without distinction of any kind, the right to participation, the enrichment of the university identity and the integration of the actors of the university in a flexible and dialogued communication. The main actions were initially aimed at:

Identification of the reality (community-subject-researcher) in which the different areas of the University of Pinar del Río carry out work in their surrounding communities. A favorable participation of the community in the identification of needs, problems and conception of action plans was confirmed. The decision-making power of the community members in the solution of these problems and the predominant decision of the external agent was not enough; in many cases, they were not in charge of this work and, therefore, with total ignorance of it.

With the realization of reflection workshops with the community, as the main communication steps, it was possible for the community to gain in confidence and motivation. By learning and rehearsing participation, the community identified the socio-cultural problems that were most affecting them and the priority according to the resources available to them.

In it, proposals were formulated and actions were planned in order to strengthen what it has as self-management to generate its own socio-cultural development and make it last over time.

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The use of participatory techniques was very timely for the animation and fulfillment of roles, since their arguments were listened to and included in the solution of various problems that they previously expected to be solved by external factors.

The community members learned to identify and discuss the problems that most affected them, to propose viable alternatives and to become involved in their solution. This confirmed that the proposed action was valid, among other things, because it taught participation based on a process of training in one's own practice where knowledge is produced and transferred directly to action.

Ten workshops were held to propose solutions to each of the problems identified with the community, where the basis was discussion, expression of ideas and proposal of solutions.

In addition, a group of training actions were developed that included the training of all the factors that had a direct and indirect bearing on community work. The faculties were in charge of guiding this process, training, advising and evaluating the actions that were carried out.

At the beginning, the coordination of the work with leaders was oriented to increase the capacity of dialogue and to overcome the institutional protagonism. The participation of teachers in the diagnosis was an important action because there they offered their appreciation of the problems and possible solutions that they had socialized. In all cases, the support response was commendable.

A working group was created that included the participation of leaders, community members and professors from the Vice-Rector's Office of University Extension to organize, plan and control the work in order to strengthen the links with the community, in a more integrated and coherent way.

In a third moment, a group of actions to articulate actors were carried out. The most outstanding was the creation of a health promotion project in the "Julio Antonio Mella" High School, which trained student health promoters, who became facilitators, not only of health prevention, but also of the promotion of the community's cultural values both within their school and in their own community.

The work of this group was fundamental due to their contribution to the formation of healthy lifestyles for the community, in order to contribute to improving their quality of life, taking into account that there were groups of risks in the community that were identified in the diagnosis.

The members of the community used spaces and institutions of the University in agreement with the Vice-Rector's Office of University Extension to carry out their activities, promote their culture and traditions; thus, spaces within the Student Residence, the handicrafts and crafts workshop, bookstore presentations and other activities to promote reading were characterized. The books were always presented by members of the community, advised by professors from the Vice-Rector's Office of University Extension.

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A group of community members drew up a plan of activities for weekends and holidays. In this way, the community contributes to the recreation of foreign students, who during this period, remain in the Student Residence.

With respect to the insufficient integration and coordination of university-community links, the dialogue and reflection workshops were of great importance because they delved into the role of organizations in the integration of actions in intra- and extra-university programs and projects in order to obtain effective results.

With the development of the experience with the members of the community, a better coordination and integration of the work of the faculties and departments of the University, in terms of community work, was achieved.

The "Los Criollitos" day care center project was reorganized, with notable acceptance. This project was an important element for the coherent integration between students, as university leaders, and community members in compliance with their social responsibility, since this institution is one of the most important in the community.

In addition, a large group of socio-cultural promotion actions were developed, including the formation of clubs and groups, whose function was to promote the dissemination of the history and traditions of the community, and were supported by teachers, students and the University's information centers. Of particular note is the Martian Club which carried out intense work in rescuing and promoting the work of the apostle.

As actions of a recreational nature, the link between the Vice-Rector's Office of University Extension and the community was progressively strengthened, incorporating members of the latter in projects, groups of supporters, etc., and in some cases providing material resources. The presence of a potential of amateur artists, among them a music group, soloists, plastic arts fans and literature fans, was confirmed.

For the best development of these amateur artists and, together with the cultural promoter of the community, the Vice-Rector's Office of University Extension asked the "Pedro Junco" Culture House, in Pinar del Río, for advice in the different branches of art.

Members of the community have been included in the "Guamá" Games, the maximum sport festival that is carried out in the University of Pinar del Río. The different faculties have inserted in the extension's dimension of the educational projects, socio-cultural actions in the community.

Finally, the experience made it possible to understand that, when proposing any university social responsibility program, it must be exclusively participatory; committing the interested parties from the design, execution, to the evaluation of the same and, above all, with the protagonism of their leaders. USR translates into the rational and coherent integration of the work of the different social actors, those of the intra- and extra-university community. This integration is a tribute to the university's primary mission as a trainer of integral professionals, which is possible if a dynamic and harmonious balance is achieved among the actors, where the participation of each one

of them plays a fundamental role in the access to all actions, in the decision making process and in the generation of solutions to their training needs.

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