Experience of good practices

Realities and challenges of community participation for social prevention. The experience of "Soñarte"

Realidades y desafíos de la participación comunitaria para la prevención social. La experiencia de "Soñarte"

Realidades e desafios da participação comunitária para a prevenção social. A experiência de "Soñarte"

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ABSTRACT

The community has been dealt from Sociology from multiple approaches. This research considered the possibilities of transformation and enrichment of its preventive action, through community participation, concretely studied in a sociocultural project. It is taken as a premise that the design and action of these projects have a preventive effect, protecting the community from social problems, becoming a cohesive and constructive scenario against social deterioration, so that preventive work is inherent to any project of this type. The objective of this work is to characterize community participation in the Sociocultural Project "Soñarte" and to propose actions for its improvement, based on the evaluation of the phases through which it passes, taking into account the transversal nature of this category and the results achieved by it since its creation. The research had an analytical descriptive character and was carried out with a mixed methodological approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques. The carried-out study obtained as a result a

characterization of community participation in the Sociocultural Project "Soñarte" and pointed out its difficulties. From a scientific and practical point of view, the research provided a proposal for actions aimed at improving community participation in the prevention work carried out by the "Soñarte" Sociocultural Project, belonging to the "Las Delicias" community.

Keywords: social prevention; community transformation; community actors; community work.

RESUMEN

La comunidad ha sido abordada desde la Sociología desde múltiples enfoques. Esta investigación consideró las posibilidades de transformación y enriquecimiento de su accionar preventivo, a través de la participación comunitaria, estudiada concretamente en un proyecto sociocultural. Se toma como premisa que el diseño y accionar de estos proyectos tienen un efecto preventivo, protegiendo a la comunidad de los problemas sociales, deviniendo en escenario cohesionador y constructivo frente al deterioro social, por lo que la labor preventiva es consustancial a cualquier proyecto de este tipo. Este trabajo tiene como objetivo caracterizar la participación comunitaria en el Proyecto Sociocultural "Soñarte" y proponer acciones para su perfeccionamiento, a partir de la valoración de las fases por las que transita, teniendo en cuenta el carácter transversal de esta categoría y los resultados alcanzados por este desde su creación. La investigación tuvo un carácter descriptivo analítico y se realizó con un enfoque metodológico mixto, combinando métodos y técnicas cuantitativas con las cualitativas. El estudio realizado obtuvo como resultado una caracterización de la participación comunitaria en el Proyecto Sociocultural "Soñarte" y señaló sus dificultades. La investigación aportó desde el punto de vista científico y práctico una propuesta de acciones dirigidas a perfeccionar la participación comunitaria para la labor de prevención que realiza el Proyecto Sociocultural "Soñarte", perteneciente a la comunidad "Las Delicias".

Palabras clave: prevención social; transformación comunitaria; actores comunitarios; trabajo comunitario.

RESUMO

A comunidade tem sido abordada a partir da Sociologia a partir de múltiplas perspectivas. Esta investigação considerou as possibilidades de transformação e enriquecimento da sua ação preventiva, através da participação da comunidade, estudada concretamente num projeto sociocultural. É tomado como premissa que a concepção e ação destes projetos têm um efeito preventivo, protegendo a comunidade de problemas sociais, tornando-se um cenário coeso e construtivo face à deterioração social, de modo que o trabalho preventivo é inerente a qualquer projeto deste tipo. O objetivo deste trabalho é caracterizar a participação da comunidade no Projeto Sociocultural "Soñarte" e propor ações para a sua melhoria, com base na avaliação das fases pelas quais passa, tendo em conta o carácter transversal desta categoria e os resultados por ela alcançados desde a sua criação. A investigação teve um carácter analítico descritivo e foi realizada com uma abordagem metodológica mista, combinando métodos e técnicas quantitativas e qualitativas. O estudo resultou numa caracterização da participação da comunidade no Projeto Sociocultural "Soñarte" e assinalou as suas dificuldades. Do ponto de vista científico e prático, a investigação forneceu uma proposta de ações destinadas a melhorar a participação da comunidade no trabalho de prevenção realizado pelo Projeto Sociocultural "Soñarte", pertencente à comunidade "Las Delicias".

Palavras-chave: prevenção social; transformação comunitária; atores comunitários; trabalho comunitário.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, in order to ameliorate the problems generated in Europe and Latin America as a consequence of social inequalities and the ineffectiveness of the State, community practices that promote human and local development, as well as a different scientific perspective of conceiving the community mainly from community work and local community development, are being erected.

The community is both the place where the individual establishes his residence and the people who live together in that place and the relationships that are established between them, it constitutes the most concrete social environment of existence, activity and development of man. It is in it where the

conditions for the development of families and for the satisfaction of their material and spiritual needs must be created (Barreno Salinas et al., 2018).

It is considered the framework to provide an integral and holistic solution to those situations that affect the population. This not only includes the group of people who share a space, it also includes the whole formed by the experiences, exchanges, meanings and values that they share and constitute the social imaginary of a given group (Curbelo Osuna & Rodríguez Echevarría, 2019).

On the other hand, prevention is considered as an action oriented to take measures to reduce the risks in which an individual, the family or the community may be immersed. The social prevention category encompasses a broad set of social problems and indirectly encompasses the precepts of society in terms of education and culture and aims to raise the material and spiritual well-being of people; it is a process consciously built from social policy, which development implies the commitment of action in a transformative way on social reality (Sánchez Sevilla et al., 2018). In turn, this is carried out through actions that strengthen social cohesion and that are carried out through programs that are oriented to modify and improve the integral formation as well as the quality of life of people (Intriago Párraga et al., 2020).

The new paradigm of social prevention holds that although the state is the governing body that defines social policies and, therefore, has a high responsibility in this area; civil society organized in communities must also assume a share of direct participation in the defense of their interests, achieving an integrated prevention vision between the state, provincial and municipal governments and community organizations to achieve true social prevention (Rodriguez, 2020). Community social prevention, therefore, is the involvement of the community in prevention actions (Intriago Párraga et al., 2020).

The Cuban State has emphasized the importance of promoting and encouraging the search for solutions tailored to the community needs of our country, through self-management and development at the local level. To achieve this objective, the Ministerial Group for Community Work of the Republic of Cuba was created (1996). This group elaborated a project for integrated community work, within which the principles, objectives and methods to guide community work in the country were established. The main objective is to transform the community through its protagonism in decision making, based on its needs and its own resources and potential to bring about changes in lifestyles and ways of life that correspond to its traditions and identity, achieving the strengthening

of its economic and socio-political activity, so that community work groups are the most responsible for carrying out this work (Guzmán Góngora, 2020).

From the creation of this group, various community projects or experiences were derived with the purpose of transforming the material and subjective life of the resident population and taking advantage of its resources and potentialities. Regulations were established that provide for preventive practice in order to comply with the state's mandate to establish a social policy, one of which objectives is to reduce crime, using non-stigmatizing and non-discriminatory community action, through the design and execution of predominantly cultural and educational activities, with the participation of those involved as a fundamental pillar for change and thus the reduction of criminogenic factors present in the social environment.

In Cuba there is an abundance of socio-cultural projects, in which an intentionality committed to the transformation of the human essence is recognized, in which synergy is created between social dynamics and the transforming capacity of culture. It is recognized that culture is a key factor to ensure the success of social change. Art, as a reflection of culture, is directly linked to social development, from art "the subject can revise his representation of the world and transform it" (Alfaro Rodríguez, 2020) and the spaces provided by the actions developed by sociocultural projects are shaped as projects with a strong territoriality, referring to the unity of a neighborhood or community (Sánchez Salinas & Mercado, 2019).

If it is taken into account the confirmed need to use non-punitive approaches to prevent maladaptive behaviors, we can understand art in particular (and culture as an encompassing entity) as a "mechanism to generate new forms of belonging, participation and community organization, as well as to enhance the development of creative and autonomous capacities in its recipients" (Infantino, 2016), so they have important results related to a broad conception of prevention fundamentally at the primary level.

According to Requena Bolívar (2018), "community participation is a changing and variable process, which is linked to attitudes, decision making and relationship between individuals" and can be conceived as a way to solve problems of various kinds; it is self-managing, provides the community with self-sufficiency and independence, thus increasing its level of autonomy. It is considered an important and fundamental part of human development. And a relevant aspect, it is a generator of

welfare to the community through the search for solutions to problems of various kinds through the incorporation of its inhabitants (Requena Bolívar, 2018).

There is consensus in the literature consulted that participation is related to power, particularly to its democratization. The Latin American Council for Adult Education defined it "as a substantive element of a popular democratic program insofar as it means power sharing, i.e., giving real decision-making power to the population to postpone, supervise and control the actions of the state" (Pontual, 1996). In order to achieve this power-sharing scenario, it is necessary that the practices of popular participation encompass a diversified, daring and planned set of initiatives involving the opening of channels of participation that guarantee the control of society over its agencies (Pontual, 1996).

The research carried out was mainly based on these notions elaborated by popular educators about participation. These notions constitute one of the main approaches on which local development and community work in Cuba are based. For Cuban popular educators, participation is more than being present, more than mobilizing, exchanging criteria, expressing opinions; it means becoming aware, taking part, getting involved, deciding and acting with commitment (González Rodríguez, 2000).

Community participation in this research was considered a process of power distribution that implies decision-making and community participation in all phases of the work and/or transformation project, from its conception and identification of the problems, the definition of its objectives, the organization of actions and the execution of solution proposals to the evaluation of its results. This is manifested in different spheres, levels and forms. It depends on motivation, training and organization.

Cuban popular educators have appropriated with a critical vision the contributions made by the Spanish researcher Fernando de la Riva (2003) for the analysis of participation in the context of community work and local and/or community development, due to its operative character. This researcher elaborated a map in which he defines the contents and/or dimensions of participation, expressed in spheres (in what), levels (where), continuity (when), forms (how), actors (who) and conditions that favor it.

These areas correspond to the stages and processes that a community project goes through: Identification and/or Diagnosis, Planning, Management and Execution and Evaluation, therefore it has a cross-cutting nature.

When speaking of the levels of participation, de la Riva refers to the means (economic, technical and human resources), the process (moments or phases of an organization) and the results (benefiting from the services or products of its activity).

As for the forms of participation, it is manifested in the degree of involvement in decision-making in the different moments and/or spheres of an organization, the continuity of participation and the actors of participation.

The degrees of involvement established in the decision-making process are as follows:

1. Being informed of the decisions made by those who manage this process. This is the minimum level of involvement
2. Being consulted for decision making, constituting a higher level of involvement than the previous one, since opinions, criteria and ideas can be exchanged, but the final decision comes from those in charge
3. Decisions are made collectively. This is the highest degree of participation

Regarding the continuity of participation, it qualifies them as never, occasional, periodic and permanent. It is classified as never or occasional when it is exceptional and occurs on the occasion of an event or circumstance, periodic when it occurs on special occasions and permanent when it is habitual.

How do they participate?

1. Directly: when the actors can participate without mediation. It means greater participation and requires special training in communication, negotiation, leadership, etc. skills.
2. Indirect: when the actors do so through elected representatives. This type of participation has faced problems when the approaches are far from the usual practice or convenient to the participants
3. Formal: when only an established rule or agreement is complied with.
4. Informal: when, regardless of the degree of formalization or in addition to it, participation occurs spontaneously and criteria, opinions, proposals, solutions, etc. are transferred

Who are the participants?

This author classifies them as managers, a few people, directors and all members; however, for the purposes of this research, the contributions of the Community Initiative Reference and Exchange Center (Cieric, 2009) were taken as a reference. Its researchers define the types of actors referred to and classify them as individual, group and institutional. Those who participate most frequently are:

- Representatives of the local government such as the delegate of the People's Power
- Representatives of the Ministry of Education as School Directors
- Representatives of the Municipality and the Department of Culture
- Productive and service companies located in the community
- Self-employed workers
- Churches and religious institutions
- Social and Mass Organizations of the Territory
- Formal and non-formal leaders
- Population groups that directly and indirectly benefit from the project

The generation of conditions that favor participation is of great importance. Fernando de La Riva (2003) suggests that these conditions are three: motivation, training and participatory organization.

According to the popular educators of the Graciela Bustillos Research Center, these aspects underlie the desire, knowledge and power to participate in community work and/or development. This is reflected in her book by Cuban researcher Elena Martínez Canals, who directed a social transformation project in a marginal neighborhood of the country's capital, where she demonstrated the potential of the community in its daily actions to solve the problems that arose there (Martínez Canals, 2011).

For the community to want, know and be able to change, it needs:

- *Be motivated*, if it feels the need to improve, wants to change and has confidence in the group (want to participate)
- *To be trained*, i.e. prepared to perform its tasks, to communicate, to function collectively (Know how to participate)

- *To be organized*, if there are structures and mechanisms that allow it to be part of the tasks, of the information or of the functioning of the organization. It means that the barriers of the refusal to share power, to underestimate the potential of others, the unhealthy personal protagonism and the struggle for the recognition of the paternity of the initiative are eliminated. (Power to Participate)

The relationship between community participation and social prevention

The most contemporary international and national theoretical positions have favored the community level as the key and leading scenario for the design, development and implementation of preventive intervention strategies, plans and/or programs, since the community is the closest setting to the individual, where his or her daily life is reproduced and where social processes have a direct influence.

In Cuba, several research studies have been carried out on community programs and projects, the one with the most connotation was conducted in 2006 by specialists from the University of Havana, the Center for Youth Studies, the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences and the Ministry of the Interior, among other institutions, with a multidisciplinary character. This research was conducted with the purpose of strengthening social prevention activity in the community scenario, due to the need imposed by the economic, political and social reality in Cuba (Vázquez Penelas, 2006). It was updated in 2014 by specialists from the Ministry of the Interior, reaching similar conclusions that demonstrate its validity.

These researchers attributed great importance to integrated community work as a method for social prevention at the local level, since it promotes shared protagonism and the action of the entire community in order to provide solutions to its problems through social and cultural development, aimed at the factors that cause them. They consider that community participation is the most effective tool to face maladapted behaviors, where the community acts as a containment barrier and becomes a cohesive and constructive scenario in the face of social deterioration. Hence the preventive effect of these community projects and their consubstantial link with community social prevention. The preventive objective is consubstantial to any community transformation project, even if it is not its central objective.

Participatory community action allows for open debate, fostering communication under equal conditions (Vecina Merchante, 2016), hence the importance given to this aspect within the development of a community project.

Several research have pointed out the presence of obstacles and limitations that could affect the effectiveness of these community projects. A recurrent limitation detected in the development of these processes is the predominance of formal participation and exogenous intervention in the development of the projects, which affects the generation of capacities that guarantee the protagonism of their actors during the process of change and thus their sustainability.

On the other hand, in the current context there has been a proliferation of maladapted behaviors that are reflected in the presence of social indiscipline, illegalities and the incidence of certain types of crime in neighborhoods of the capital, which have had a negative impact on citizen and national security. These elements reinforce the need to evaluate the community work carried out in the country, in its most concrete form, with a view from the perspective of community participation, since only on the basis of the results of these analyses will real transformation processes and the permanence in time of their achievements be achieved.

In this opportunity, the Sociocultural Project "Soñarte" was taken as a case study. "Soñarte" is a sociocultural project that was conceived as an educational way to generate harmonious relationships and a favorable environment in the neighborhood, favoring the reaffirmation or positive transformation of behaviors in children, adolescents and young people, as well as in groups in condition of vulnerability present in the community "Las Delicias", belonging to the Popular Council #5 Magdalena-Torrente of the Cotorro municipality, Havana province. This project carries out a systematic work in the development of artistic and cultural manifestations oriented to social prevention, in which the family, the school and the whole community participate in order to contribute to achieve an atmosphere of tranquility and citizen security.

In an interview with the promoter of this project, she stated that achievements have been made in improving the quality of life of the children and their families, who play a leading role because of the attractiveness and transforming effect this project has on them. However, there is dissatisfaction with the lack of total fulfillment of the declared intentions, particularly in relation to the implementation of a systematic work that mobilizes the family and young people of the community in a more general sense. Another perceived dissatisfaction is related to the insertion and participation of young people in the artistic workshops and other cultural activities carried out by the project, which was considered insufficient. The same is true of the participation of those with maladaptive behaviors.

The above considerations motivated the selection of this project as the object of study, the characterization of community participation was carried out, the strengths and limitations in the participatory processes were identified and a proposal was made for actions that will allow its improvement, all of which constitutes the objective of the work presented here.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research had an analytical descriptive character and was carried out with a mixed methodological approach, based on the interweaving of quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques. These were useful for triangulation and guaranteed the reliability of the results obtained.

The instruments used for the collection of information were: in-depth interview, participant observation, survey and documentary analysis. The quantitative data made it possible to evaluate the statistical results in terms of the operation of the project, and the qualitative data made it possible to study the selected topics, cases or facts in depth, providing decisive information on the perspectives of the participants and the reasons for certain results observed in the quantitative analysis.

For the interviews, a non-probabilistic, intentional sampling was applied, in which ten members of the project management group were selected, who met the criteria of representing all the areas covered by the project and that their seniority as members of this group had a minimum of three years, plus a private sector worker who met the condition of providing services to the community for at least three years and being involved in the project. All representatives of political and mass organizations were interviewed.

For the interviews with the inhabitants of the community, four clusters were formed and group interviews were conducted.

Two questionnaires were applied as follows: a first questionnaire was applied to the universe formed by all the members of the management group (16) and a second questionnaire was applied to a sample selected by the simple random sampling method, under the condition that they were residents of the community, had been living there for more than three years and had not been previously selected for the interviews. Thirty residents were surveyed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Community participation in the project according to areas of participation (In which)

Community participation in the sociocultural project "Soñarte" was evidenced mainly in the execution of the tasks or actions planned for the fulfillment of the objectives set, corresponding to the management and execution phase. In these, the actors play a leading role in the organization and/or execution of the activities. However, it should be noted that the project was initiated by a community leader, so it was not the result of the intervention of external agents.

With respect to the diagnosis of the reality, as a positive aspect, it was noted that the project under study had an initial, albeit insufficient, survey that made it possible to detect the most pressing sociocultural and criminological problems of "Las Delicias". However, it did not take into account the likes, interests and felt needs of the resident population, as it did not promote the collective and heterogeneous participation of the community at any stage of its preparation (in terms of gender, age, occupation, race, religion, among others). From here, it is derived that those involved in the diagnosis, instead of acting as subjects, were treated as objects of analysis. Their role was limited to acting as sources of information, neglecting the subjective assessment of the community, so that the assessment was the result of an individual and normativist reflection of the actions implemented.

In addition to the above, the dynamic role of the actors in the implementation phase was not the same for all, and this difference was expressed in the different degrees of commitment to the organization of the planned tasks and in attendance at the activities. There are actors who do not participate at all, such as the enterprise Ómnibus Metropolitanos, located in the community, which does not support the project with the availability of transportation to carry out certain activities foreseen in the action plan, in spite of the requests made by the management.

Community participation in the project according to the levels of participation

As for the levels of participation (**where**), the community actors have participated fundamentally through the contribution of material and human resources during the execution phase of the tasks. They have provided logistical assurance and have contributed in the realization of family dynamics, and the educational institutions located in the community have promoted that the art instructors, who work in the community, give classes in the artistic workshops.

The management group, from the moment of its formation, has had an active participation in the process of carrying out the community diagnosis, the delimitation of the objectives, the elaboration of procedures and working methods and in the delivery of the information requested by the municipality of Culture in its intention of evaluation. This participation can be seen in all 4 stages, showing an important protagonism that speaks in favor of the existence of centralization in decision making.

The community has participated in the sociocultural and criminological results. However, there has been less participation of groups in conditions of vulnerability and those with maladaptive behaviors, particularly children and young people, in the project's workshops and artistic events, mainly due to the lack of a diagnosis of tastes and interests and the lack of subarticulated projects aimed at secondary and tertiary prevention levels.

The preventive actions and practices designed at these levels have been conditioned by the work carried out by their managers within the Prevention and Social Attention Commissions at the municipal level and in the Prevention and Social Attention Groups, in terms of working methods and conceptions of this work. In the preventive methods they employ, coercive elements that impose change underlie, such as requiring the signing of a document in which people undertake not to relapse into maladapted behavior and carrying out controls in the different areas in which these people develop in order to verify whether or not the change has taken place. Therefore, the participation of these groups has limitations, as they are not conceived as capable and/or responsible for structuring their changes according to the needs they themselves identify. Nevertheless, an effort to use persuasion and consensus can be appreciated, by encouraging the participation of psychologists and proposing their insertion in the project.

Community participation according to the forms of participation

When it is analyzed the involvement of the actors in the decision-making process (**how much**) carried out in each of the different stages through which the project has passed, it can be seen that decisions are made centrally by the management group; even when there is an intention to consult the community actors, the final decision is always made by the managers. It is confirmed that in practice the project presented difficulties in the development of horizontal relationships among its participants and in the symmetrical construction of power, essential elements of any process of

community social prevention, which is based on participatory democracy as the core element to bring about a true transformation.

This problem is evident in different testimonies obtained from interviews with managers:

> (...) the community actors involved in the project are shown the Action Plan prepared by the management group, they give their opinions, but the final decision is always ours (...) (Lead manager).

> (...) As a project, we need to involve the community in the management group meetings so that they can contribute their ideas and give their criteria (...) in the accountability meetings, a point is requested and they are informed of the planned activities and are invited to participate (...) (Psychologist).

With respect to the participation actors (**who**), those who have been involved in the project in one way or another, in addition to the management group, are the following actors:

- Political and mass organizations
- The president of the people's council and his/her delegate
- The representatives of the internal order (Sector Chief and Minors´s Officer)
- Educational institutions (school principals and psychologist)
- The cultural institution (through its municipal officials and art instructors)
- Public Health Institution (through the family physician and nurse)
- Self-employed workers (bricklayers and sweets makers)
- Children, adolescents, youth and groups in conditions of vulnerability

Regarding the modes of participation (**how**), it was found that this was conceived to be carried out indirectly through support groups designated by the managers, which are composed of representatives of political and mass organizations, Culture, the Popular Council, schools, the delegate, the family doctor and nurse, parents and young people. The groups in vulnerable conditions are represented through the delegate and the political and mass organizations, which is a very indirect and merely formal representation.

Regarding the continuity of the participation of community actors (**when**), the results show efforts to achieve the articulation of the actors in the social prevention work they carry out; however,

insufficiencies in cooperation and/or coordination were observed, characterized by intermittency, unidirectionality and, on occasions, by the absence of both.

The relationship between the actors is subjectively conditioned by the struggle for the paternity of the initiative, which leads to a lack of awareness of the shared protagonism of all those involved. It is also due to the prevalence of a top-down mental structure, which does not favor the establishment of a democratic relationship that promotes the conciliation of approaches to action and interests through dialogue and community protagonism.

In order to delve deeper into what may be influencing the characteristics of participation in the Sociocultural Project "Soñarte", described above, the research was based on the indispensable conditions identified in the literature for the achievement of full participation: wanting to participate, knowing how to participate and being able to participate.

a) Wanting to participate:

In order to analyze the motivation of community actors to participate in the project, they were divided into two groups: the target population of the project and the social and institutional actors that have been involved in the project in some way. A comparison was made of the behavior of this variable at the time of the research in 2019 with respect to the year in which the project was launched in 2011.

- Motivation of the target population

The results showed that at the beginning of the project, children, adolescents and young people were motivated to participate for personal reasons. This motivation was influenced by the inclination towards some artistic manifestation, mainly towards plastic arts and dance, the opinion of friends and parents; the latter consider that this participation complements the education their children receive at school, and contributes to regulate their behavior.

In the case of young people, it was found in the review of documents that, of a total of 78 young people residing in the "Las Delicias" community, only one fifth currently participate in the project. Of these, 6 have done so since its creation, which shows that from the beginning there was a lack of motivation to participate on the part of this age group; this behavior has remained the same at the time of the research. This statement is also supported by the managers' perception of the young

people's unwillingness to participate in the proposed activities, as well as their integration in the support groups.

The community survey helped to clarify the reasons for this behavior. It showed that 53% of those consulted (30) do not participate in the project, mainly due to lack of time (50%) and lack of interest (25%). Thirty percent of those surveyed considered the cultural and recreational activities carried out for young people to be insufficient to some extent. This result is clearly reflected in the demands made by the respondents as suggestions: they suggest that the project should hold soccer competitions, dance parties with recorded music, that the activities should be extended to weekends and that they should be held at night.

In the case of groups in vulnerable conditions, from the beginning to the present, their participation in the artistic workshops has been meager, although the interviews support the incorporation of some of them, mainly children and young people who presented maladapted behaviors with favorable results; the desired influence of art as a tool for the transformation of individuals has not been able to reach all of them.

- Motivation of social and institutional actors

The motivation of social and institutional actors to participate in the project has gone through periods of motivation and demotivation. The interviews showed that, at the beginning of the project, despite the difficulties in promoting the initiative, there was a greater participation of these actors. According to the testimonies collected, they had a mainly individual and political interest that could be satisfied with their participation in the project.

Their desire to participate was also expressed in the active role they assumed in the execution of the project's tasks by offering their homes as spaces for carrying out the activities. Some of them put their skills in different art forms to use in the project and gave classes, mainly in theater, to children and adolescents. They also counted on the support and participation of the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba at the Municipal level.

However, at the time of this research, participation was perceived to have decreased, mainly that of the Sector Chief, the Juvenile´s Officer, the President of the People's Council and the Delegate. The reasons were related to the replacement of the people who held these positions and the discrepancies in prevention methods between the management group, the Sector Chief and the Minors´s Officer.

The discrepancies stem from the management group's disapproval of the adoption of coercive rather than educational measures. This position of the managers demonstrates the intention of the project to influence with socio-cultural and educational methods to promote the transformation of maladapted behaviors, hence the importance of the social prevention work carried out in the community. The testimony of the main promoter confirms it..." the Juvenile Officer and the Chief of the sector solve everything with the Guidance Center, that's why sometimes I don't even call them".

This testimony is also a reflection of how complicated it is for these actors to assume both functions at the same time, prevent and repress, being the challenge assumed today by these figures: to achieve the right balance between preventive and reactive actions, as expressed in the research conducted by Barroso González (2016).

The bibliography consulted recognizes that there are insufficiencies in the training and development of specialists in children, among them the scarce development of skills to solve the situations that arise. Regarding decision making, the formative and social contexts are not applied, there is scarce use of the research activity aimed at scientifically solving the problems that arise in practice and the way in which the different contents in the curriculum necessary for the professional performance in the solution of conflicts are integrated is insufficient. There is a contradiction between the permanent preparation of the specialist in minors, the needs for improvement and the transformations in the formative and social contexts that limit his performance (González Pelier et al., 2021).

In the case of the delegate, it can be deduced from the statements made that the cause of her lack of participation in the project is due to the centralization of decision-making by the management group.

The participation of the representatives of the self-employed sector was predominant in supporting the improvement of the project headquarters and logistically ensuring the planned activities, however, they stood out for their lack of participation in the activities proposed by the project, showing disinterest in their socio-cultural proposals.

b) Education and training (know how to participate)

Eighty-one percent of the stakeholders have a high school or higher level of education and experience in community work; however, there were limitations in their methodological and scientific preparation to participate in a project of this type.

With the exception of the head of the Artistic Company, the general manager, the head of the Plastic Arts Area and the delegate of the People's Power, the rest of the community actors have not taken courses in popular education, community culture, community intervention or leadership, as indicated in the interviews conducted.

On the other hand, none of the actors received training in topics such as conflict resolution and group work, control, organization of human, material and technical resources. These are essential aspects for their work in the community.

These results confirm that community stakeholders are not sufficiently trained to participate in the project. In this situation, the management group is included, which brings as a consequence the difficulties they have presented to encourage the motivation of the rest of the actors, as well as the deficiencies evidenced in the previous diagnosis.

c) Organization (Possibility to participate)

In the review of the action plans and the interviews, it was found that this community project has generated spaces that facilitate participation through the meetings of its management, with the heads of each area that integrates it, for which the parents of children, adolescents and young people are invited. In the case of the meetings of the Education Area and the Prevention Area, it is foreseen that the directors of the school institutions, the political and mass organizations, the Chief of the sector, the Minors' Officer and the Social Worker will participate. The situation of vulnerable groups is discussed at these meetings.

In order to facilitate participation, mechanisms created for other purposes have also been used, such as the assemblies of the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution and the Federation of Cuban Women, the Accountability Assemblies in which the delegate of the People's Power and the community participate, as well as the meetings of the School Council, in which a representative of the Prevention Area and the zonal nucleus of the Communist Party of Cuba participate.

However, obstacles were identified that limit the possibilities of the actors to participate actively in the project in all its phases, fundamentally of a subjective nature. From the analysis of the interviews, it was inferred the resistance of some managers who founded the project to share the power and the struggle for the paternity of the initiative, in this respect the main manager recognized the limitation

caused in the project by the authoritarian conceptions, which hinder the motivation and commitment of the community.

Proposed actions

1. The management group, together with social and institutional stakeholders, should update the diagnosis so that it reflects the interests and needs of the population, so that the project proposals and actions respond to the interests and aspirations of the community, enhancing the motivation to participate in the project and thus the full exploitation of the opportunities and benefits it generates.

To this end, and taking into account that the form of participation in the "Soñarte" project is indirect, it is recommended that during the diagnostic process the results obtained be returned to the population through the application of participatory techniques that allow reflection, contributions and proposals to be made in relation to this diagnosis, through dialogue and consensus, which are very useful for raising awareness and empowering the resident population's will to change. In this way, it will be possible to create the conditions that will encourage the motivation to participate in the project.

It is important to emphasize that participation must be heterogeneous, including all community stakeholders, and that a process of concertation of interests must be carried out, encouraging respectful dialogue, taking into account that interests and criteria can be very varied. This is a key element, as it was identified as a factor that has affected the motivation of some stakeholders. Achieving heterogeneity of participation will especially favor articulation with institutional actors.

The criteria of vulnerable groups should be taken into account to ensure that the project reflects the interests, needs, knowledge and cultural practices of these groups, which would enhance their participation and thus the legitimacy and appropriation of the responses provided by the project, an aspect that significantly influences the effectiveness of community social prevention work.

It is necessary to promote the participation of both men and women in order to take into account the gender approach in the development of the project. This issue has not been intentionally developed by the project, which is one of its limitations in the promotion of equity and sustainability. The design and implementation of actions that take this perspective into account are fundamental for the transformation of hegemonic gender relations and the attenuation of inequalities. This aspect brings up the need to be well trained.

2. The preparation of the preventive subjects is of vital importance; the project should become a learning space for them. The involvement of all community actors during the stages of the project contributes to generate a learning environment that will eventually give rise to a project culture that will certify the consolidation of the social transformation process. The practical work during this process will be used as a fundamental resource for the training of the actors.

However, the starting point should be the creation of a training program or strategy that includes theoretical and methodological training actions that create or strengthen the capacities of community actors to design and manage the development of the project, with the methodological support of experts. These actions should be aimed at receiving advice on participatory methods, cultural management and community social prevention, mainly in the case of social actors and institutions.

With respect to the project's target population, children, adolescents, young people and groups in vulnerable conditions, together with the diagnosis of their interests, the project should create workshops and/or sub articulated projects according to their needs and knowledge, and at the same time promote the rescue of the community's traditions and customs, as well as a culture of recreation and healthy leisure, which helps to create and consolidate an environmental culture, particularly in those families that present maladapted behavior. It could also promote entrepreneurial skills in order to satisfy their basic needs in a legitimate way.

3. The management group should promote organizational mechanisms that allow community stakeholders to be decision-makers in the project. To this end, participation could be extended to all community stakeholders in meetings aimed at drawing up the activity plan. The participation of vulnerable groups and those with maladaptive behaviors is essential. The managers could take advantage of the Accountability Assemblies not only to report on the activities, but also to exchange, listen to opinions and proposals regarding the diagnosis and its updating, as well as to evaluate the progress of the project in terms of the processes or stages it is going through and the results obtained.

By way of conclusions, community participation has presented difficulties in the development of horizontal relationships between its participants and in the symmetrical construction of power, an aspect that has had repercussions on the effectiveness of preventive actions, mainly at the secondary and tertiary levels. The failures in the coordination relations between the management group and the social actors involved led to the fact that, on occasions, an adequate integration is not achieved

for the sake of community transformation. The mental structure of verticalism persists in the practice of community work. Difficulties in the training of the management group stand out as one of the elements that most hinder the social prevention work carried out in the community.

From a scientific and practical point of view, the research provides a proposal for actions aimed at improving community participation in the prevention work carried out by the "Soñarte" Sociocultural Project, belonging to the "Las Delicias" community. This proposal was made on the basis of the management of conditions that guarantee it, starting from its resources and potentialities.

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Conflict of interest

Authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contribution

All authors designed the study, analyzed the data, and prepared the draft. They reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approved the version finally submitted.

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