



The children's collective as a space for artistic production and cultural management

El colectivo infantil como espacio de producción artística y gestión cultural

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Abstract

Social life is full of multiple manifestations that will evidence the structures that sustain it; given the dynamics of a globalized world, it is necessary to direct efforts to culture as one of the essential nuclei in the evolution of societies. Due to the above, the population has generated proposals such as cultural collectives, which try to be the space where such production is generated, protected and motivated. Directed by the methodology of action research, the Cocotón Children's Collective project was born, a space where children from the city of Tehuacán and its region are apprentices, producers and cultural managers, allowing them to interact, express themselves and take on new roles in their development environments. The first stage of the project's implementation was achieved thanks to the interest and active participation of the children's population, using the resources and capital of their home environments.

Keyword: Arts education, cultural management, children.

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Resumen

La vida social está llena de múltiples manifestaciones que van a evidenciar las estructuras que la sustentan; dadas las dinámicas de un mundo globalizado, es necesario dirigir esfuerzos a la cultura como uno de los núcleos esenciales en el devenir de las sociedades. Debido a lo anterior, la población ha generado propuestas como los colectivos culturales, que tratan de ser el espacio en donde se genere, proteja y motive dicha producción. Dirigido por la metodología de investigación acción, nace el proyecto del Colectivo Infantil Cocotón, un espacio en el que niños de la ciudad de Tehuacán y su región, son aprendices, productores y gestores culturales; permitiéndoles interactuar, expresarse y tomar nuevos roles en sus entornos de desarrollo. La primera etapa de aplicación del proyecto, se logró gracias al interés y la participación activa de la población infantil, utilizando los recursos y capitales de sus entornos de origen.

Palabra clave: Educación artística, gestión cultural, infancia

Introduction

Social life is full of manifestations that will allow the transmission of culture. Given the dynamics of globalization, it is necessary to direct attention to culture as one of the essential nuclei in the evolution of societies. This is how each country has built discourses and practices to highlight identity, causing the objects of culture to be modified and adapted depending on the time in which they are inserted.

Society appropriates these discourses and responds to cultural needs through various proposals; one of these forms are the cultural collectives, which offer a space for interaction, learning, expression and development of multiple skills. This is how this project is gestated, in which, the children of Tehuacan and its region have the opportunity to influence cultural expression and management under the following general and specific objectives: To design a space for cultural production and management under the collective model, focused on the child population; To examine the existence of common cultural elements that favor the insertion of a child collective and its due correspondence with the curricular contents; To identify the child population with concerns about artistic and cultural production; To plan mediation strategies between formal and informal education, as cultural sources. With this project we intend to vindicate the role of artistic education as the axis for an integral formation of children, fostering values, allowing them to recognize their individuality and guiding them towards active, responsible and informed citizen participation.

Childhood is conceived as the stage in which children acquire the capital necessary for social life; this condition indicates that children are incapable of expressing their opinions, participating and proposing; therefore, the aim is to promote the participation of children, aiming at an integral development that will allow them to enhance their autonomy.

"A large percentage of the world population, are girls and boys" (Chacón, 2015, p. 134), so the UN, attends to children, considering them as individuals with the right to full physical, mental and social development, and with the right to freely express their opinions, arguing that, the comprehensive care of childhood guarantees the survival and progress of human society. In addition, it should be kept in mind that such definition, for Durán (2015) goes through a process of social construction; thus, more significant conceptions identified by the school of Culture and Personality, stand out:

Three different types of culture: postfigurative, children learn primarily from their elders; cofigurative, both children and adults learn from their peers; and prefigurative where adults also learn from children. (Jones, 2008)

Complementing the above, Erickson's Theory of Psychosocial Development points out that the context and the individual exert a mutual influence between them, allowing people to guarantee their physical and symbolic continuity in society. Pavón & Ferruz, (2010) according to the Mexican Political Constitution, the country is governed by democracy, which opens the possibility for citizens to take "actions that affect the social order in their relationship with power" (Botero, Torres, 2008, p. 566). To understand political participation, it is necessary to take into account that people are integrated, "in response to needs or challenges to authority and institutions" (Garcés, 2010, p. 63).

In addition, "it is necessary to recognize the multidimensionality of the phenomenon", since "today, this participation takes different forms and uses new spaces to be exercised". (Hernández, 2018 p. 45) because nowadays, this participation takes different forms and uses new spaces to be exercised. Therefore, political participation has to do with the way in which people organize themselves, focusing on the search for the common good. Art is a space for personal and social expression and knowledge; in SEP programs, it figura as a subject, but, in school realities it is usually omitted because it is considered not very relevant in the academic trajectory; there are few institutions that consider that:

Arts education enriches and makes a great cognitive contribution to the development of students' skills and abilities, such as entrepreneurship, cultural diversity, innovation,

creativity and curiosity, as well as contributes self-confidence, respect and tolerance (Aptus, 2021, p. 2).

Creativity has been linked to art; however, the individual is also capable of directing his creative capacity to the resolution of personal and community needs, students, by automating the processes and skills involved in creative thinking, are able to transfer them to the resolution of problems in their daily lives; therefore, the role of arts education should be vindicated as a meeting point for the individual and his context.

Collectives have common objectives, activities and identities. They are important because they are "agglutinated by horizontal forms and with "slogans" related to everyday life" Garcés (2010), as they seek to make effective changes without resorting to formal organizations In the academic production around collectives, the action of youth collectives stands out, as these spaces are used to make visible their position on issues of social relevance; however, this does not mean that other age groups do not tend to group together, dressing the collectives they form with their own significance.

Since contemporary times, childhood has been considered vulnerable, creating imaginaries where children are perceived as beings incapable of having an active and autonomous participation, so the spaces for participation are usually adult-centric, therefore, they pursue objectives that are far from the reality they live, creating tensions, as stated by Fernández in (Brussino, Imhoff, 2013, p. 206).

There is evidence of the emergence of two positions regarding the social role and socio-political participation of children: the Paradigm of Integral Child Protection and what has come to be called the Paradigm of Child Protagonism. Both positions criticize the ideas of the Social Control Paradigm, in the framework of which children are conceived as incapable, immature and incomplete beings. That is, children are seen as passive [...], there is no participation of children in the social sphere since they are not considered citizens [...], while there is a hierarchical and asymmetrical relationship in terms of power with adults [...]. At the same time, through the various socialization agencies, the aim is to homogenize, discipline and prevent deviations, with the main goal being adaptation rather than problematization and the development of a critical spirit on the part of the children.

A phrase attributed to Phylicia Rashad says "before speaking, children sing; before writing, they draw; as soon as they stand up, they dance..."; therefore, it could be assured that expression, self-knowledge and abstraction are an innate part of the human being and, if they are enhanced, it would be possible to achieve an optimal

biopsychosocial development, where self-awareness is achieved in order to have an impact on society.

Childhood has been defined from the vision of other age groups, although acculturation is necessary, it may tend to make specific perceptions invisible, this is evident in academic production, where an effort has been made to "translate" children's experiences or reproduce models of consultation, participation and expression that are functional for other age groups. Regarding participation spaces, the INE carries out the children and youth consultation, where children express what they would like the government to do in favor of the population; another space is the Children's Parliament of the girls and boys of Mexico, which is held annually, where elementary school children compete to become children's deputies. Even with events of this type, the aim is for participation to be transformed and occupy a leading role as proposed in the work "From participation to child protagonism" Alfageme, Cantos, Martínez (2003), on the other hand appeal to the fact that, in the globalized context, it is necessary for participation to be based on culture, since this can establish a respectful and tolerant dialogue with the different people with whom we interact on a daily basis. It would be impossible to link all the chosen concepts without taking into account the neurosciences, which link organic development with the influence generated by the feelings of the individual around their cognitive, academic and sensory processes and how, by taking experience to the limit, it is possible to learn, to know and to know oneself, to regulate and manage for the common good.

Finally, it is necessary to mention that there are references of children's collectives, but their main goal has not been the development of children's participation based on art; there is only coincidence in the detection of a need to allow the use of categories coming from children, an example of this is the work around the images of childhood in an urban and indigenous context, to see how the context influences the significations. What has been addressed in this brief review, indicates that, even if childhood has already been addressed, it has not been completely exhausted.

Materials and methods

Educational practice tries to respond to current needs; globalization and communication opportunities have made it possible to learn about techniques, strategies, processes and results obtained in other parts of the world, enriching teachers; however, it can also happen that, since they are not contextualized, they lose their effectiveness and do not have the expected impact. This is due to the fact that education maintains a relationship with the contexts and their respective cultures. Therefore, this proposal is based on the methodology of action research, whose finality is "to solve daily and immediate problems and improve concrete practices. Its

fundamental purpose is focused on providing information to guide decision-making for programs, processes and reforms" (Baptista, Fernández, and Hernández, 2006, p.706), which implies that the results obtained will be used to modificate elements present in the reality of individuals. It should be noted that by its type, it has a humanistic and heuristic approach, since it is intended that participants contribute to their integral development from self-management, not only for a personal good, but to channel it towards a common good. Thus, under these guidelines "Cocotón: Children's Cultural Collective" is born.

As previously detailed, art offers qualities for cognitive, emotional and motor development; it has been considered in basic education in our country; however, it has been left aside. After a brief questionnaire applied to a sample of parents and students in the city of Tehuacán, the panorama of the imaginary around art education, accompaniment and the spaces offered by the city for children to have contact with artistic and cultural production was known.

In the results obtained, it was expressed the need for children to have a deeper approach to art, since most of them only have contact with it at school; parents recognize the qualities that art offers to their children; they also identify that most children are interested in the practice; in addition to the above, the spaces for art and culture in the city are scarce, have little diffusion, are usually expensive and are not conditioned so that children can be inserted in them; Finally, parents recognize that children have the potential to generate their own artistic and cultural production, as long as they are accompanied to discover the discipline that most attracts their attention, the techniques, materials, and processes, and they are given the necessary support at home so that they can put it fully into practice.

For the first stage of development of the Cocoton Collective (to which the results presented in this text belong), agents who served as instructors were invited and selected based on the needs and interests of the children, so that the collective could fulfill its objective; therefore, surveys, interviews, informal talks and agreements with those involved were applied.

Once these data and agreements were in place, it was possible to select the workshops (dance, plasticine modeling, guitar, singing, storytelling, watercolor and photography), draw up schedules, plan activities and logistics. Thus, by inviting potential members, the dynamics to be followed in the development of the project were made clear. The climax of this development was when the sessions got

underway. Initially, the possibility of carrying out the workshops in a face-to-face or hybrid modality was considered, however, the conditions derived from the pandemic prevented this from happening. Each of the phases was evaluated to improve the conditions of the service. Efforts were made to reduce costs and it is expected that, in other stages, external funding will be obtained to make the project more solid and sustainable. Once the workshops were completed, a sample was made for the community according to each of the disciplines, in addition to maintaining a constant dialogue and follow-up with both children and parents, which allowed for a qualitative evaluation of the results.

Results

In the different phases of this first stage, the interest that children and parents have in artistic education was evident; in some cases, it was strange that the workshops were given free of charge; however, when they learned about the conditions in depth, they were happy to participate. While it is true that it is possible to polish the work to fully achieve the objectives set, each workshop contributed from its field of action so that these were achieved as far as possible. We intend to give continuity to these courses and according to the testimonies collected, we have the support of children and parents, based on the degree of satisfaction with what was offered; therefore, we will proceed to design new stages of the project, events, lectures, etc. to keep the Cocotón collective alive. On the other hand, favorable changes in the perceptions of art are perceived in both children and parents, and an advance in personal, social and technical skills was noted in the participants of the workshops, which indicates that continuity and improvement in the results is possible.

Conclusions

In the city of Tehuacán, there is interest in the existence of spaces for creation, promotion and cultural management, especially those that are open to children, because, in the acculturation of societies, the transmission of knowledge, techniques, codes and symbols that imply a permanence of local and regional identity is perceived as necessary; To detach art from the academic environment, closes opportunities to achieve the integral development of individuals and to form significant and situated learning according to the reality of the contexts in which children develop, without forgetting the possibility of interacting with other realities, knowing other symbolic systems and fostering tolerant and respectful intercultural relations so pressing for the globalization of which we are a part.

In the same sense, forming awareness of the exercise of responsible and informed citizenship from an early age would point to useful and practical improvements that

seek the common good. Therefore, Cocoton Collective has become a space for artistic expression, cultural management and intercultural experience; being a project with incidence and social participation, it is exposed to multiple changes and even adaptations in other environments, so that, it is expected that from the foundations laid in this work, more spaces of this type in favor of children will be formed.

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