

**MONOGRAPH**

**TERRITORIAL NETWORKS OF  
SOCIAL-EDUCATIONAL ACTION, AN  
INVESTMENT IN COLLABORATIVE  
SOCIAL INNOVATION**



## PRESENTATION

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Lifelong education has been publicly recognized and promoted during the last decade, in order to extend it in breadth and depth -integral education scoping all dimensions of human beings-, as well as in continuity through the stages of the life cycle. This is largely a result of the effects of globalization, hyperconnectivity, rapid rates of change in knowledge and production systems and increasing awareness about citizenship and leisure and culture rights. This reevaluation prompted the educational thought to discuss the validity of classic definitions of formal, non-formal or informal education, in view of the need to tackle the current educational challenge in a more global and interdependent way (Caride, 2004; Ortega, 2005; Fullan, 2013) in which all pedagogies matter, weaving social and educational aspects (Civís & Riera, 2007), formal and non-formal educational processes (March & Orte, 2014), to jointly empower and enrich the constitution of a better mankind.

In this network society (Castells, 2000), schools lose the monopoly of education, being forced to respond to specific social-educational needs for children, needs that used to correspond exclusively to family and social education in the bygone era. The growing complexity leads to crisis in the educational systems and, consequently, heats the debate on education, its professionals, contents and methods. The controversy reaches public policies in education, mainly school-focused, and opens a window of opportunity, given that it adds a con-

ceptual perspective which prompts education to be broader and more social than mere instruction of the young. Thus, school and teachers share their professional area with other educational agents, which actually operate within the territory but do not depend on school discipline (Longás, 2008; 264).

Nevertheless, the alleged crisis does not mean education crisis, since its role is essential to meet the needs of human development and, at the same time, respond to the increasing social division and exclusion. Such crisis aims to surpass the boundaries of curricula in the pursuit of a collective education integrated into society, being the latter the principal center of interest. In this respect, the search for an educational response to current educational challenge is creating new forms of social-educational action, which is transforming roles for teachers, social educators and other agents performing educational work. These changes can be seen in experiences at the micro level, generated for instance in educational centers focused on neighborhood or community (Flecha, Padrós & Puigdemívol, 2003); in community service efforts to resolve specific issues, such as inclusion of adolescents (Alsinet, Riba, Ribera & Subirats, 2003; Santibáñez & Martínez-Pampliega, 2013); in global projects like Educating Cities and City Education Project (Blanco, 2006; Subirats, 2007); or in strategic and systematic linkage of social-educational projects in a local level and particular contexts due

to collaboration among agents involved in a same area, organized in social-educational networks in a local level (Civís & Longás, 2015). These include the following: Zones d'Action Prioritaire (France, 1982), Education Action Zones (United Kingdom, 1998), Extended Schools (United Kingdom, 2004), The Harlem Children's Zone (USA, 1990) or Planes de Entorno and Redes Educativas Locales (Spain, 2000).

This monograph displays contributions from researchers directly connected to these experiences. These are new ways to coordinate and optimize interventions between agents and institutions which depend on various administrations and on civil society, emerging as innovative ways of effective assistance to social-educational needs of our citizens (Díaz-Gibson, Civís & Longás, 2013; Civís & Longás, 2015), to the boost of collaborative social innovation (Sorensen & Torfing, 2011) and to the building of social capital in communities (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003). From the list of selected articles, four of them present the current state of networking and cooperation networks at international level, with a special emphasis on leadership and governance of these experiences. Another three articles are focused on different stages and functions of the assessment applied from the program Caixa Proinfancia in the network monitoring for the educational development of vulnerable children suffering from poverty (currently the most relevant public / private collaborative social-educational program in Spain).

All articles tackle the critical points in these initiatives: leadership, relations among networks, social innovation and apprenticeship, its contextualized launching from the initial assessment and its impact on people and community. They will offer a global approach to the emerging focuses in social-educational intervention initiatives, bringing to light its theoretical-practise validity through evaluative research.

The first article, carried out using a research in USA, spotlights educational leadership and the importance of its performance in context, necessarily linked to networking and the growing relationships among cultures and organizations. The launch of every process such as this requires a global approach to necessities and resources, which can incorporate both crosscutting and systemic view in the interaction between community and territory. This way, a study about poverty-stricken children in Bilbao gives us a previous step to promote a public / private collaborative networking in the same town. Then (third article), taking into consideration a proven experience in a school district in California (USA) serving thousands of students,

key points of the network governance and critical factors for a sustainable productive leadership are presented and analyzed. The fourth article tackles the networking as enabler of a better comprehension of children and families; this knowledge built collaboratively generates better actions, raises expectations of success and impacts on the professional development of actors involved. Professional culture is specifically addressed in the fifth article from a sample of Dutch teachers. This research claims that the professional effectiveness positively correlates with the quality of social networks of teachers. The link among connectivity, networking logics and the strengthening of social capital leads to speculation on the validity of these hypothesis which associates nets with professional development of different educational actors, not only teachers. The sixth article presents effects and viability of change in the program Caixa Proinfancia in Spain, from an initial model focused on assistance to the current proposal based on territorial, systemic, networking action in context. Possible ways for the evolution of public policies in a paradigm of social-educational action in complex scenarios are pointed out. Finally, the seventh article revises the theories which support social-educational networks and its contribution to social educational innovation, highlighting the potential of leadership in networks to maximize the impact of every social educational actor in a territory. This last article could be introductory instead of conclusive as it is considered given its position in the monographic.

To finish this introduction, we should point out that, given the complexity of realities and scenarios in which education is set and the inefficiency that traditional welfare policies show, there is a need for a new perspective in new collaborative networking forms that are progressively making their way overcoming difficulties. The best way that impellers of community development have to stimulate responsibilities and collaboration is to recognize the interdependence of problems and their solutions, as well as to promote the joint understanding of social educational challenges and way of life. This is, though, only the first step to avoid inaccurate plans on account of disciplinary hyperspecialisation and its highly bureaucratized institutionalization processes. Territory, proximity, participation and innovation belong to a "social intelligence" which is built on a network used as a metaphor for neuronal networks functioning in our brain in its development to intelligence.

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