

## PRESENTATION

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In recent years, social changes are being originated at a rapid pace and context has moved further and further away from past, abandoning traditions and building a future based on the processing of information and the use of technology, with everything that entails. Barely “liquid modernity culture is no longer conceived as learning culture based on accumulation... it now looks more like disengagement, discontinuity and oblivion” (Bauman, 2005, p. 83).

These changes are a step forward the emergence of new scenarios where time and space are not linear, which means new educational and leisure challenges for both vulnerable youth and professionals and institutions that care for them. In this way, processes as: globalization, the increase of people with functional diversity, the weakening of the primary care network along with growing individualism, migrations, evolution of technologies within the *Knowledge Society*, as well as deficit in the economy and its crisis –which stress destructuring of employment and the worsening of working conditions- which causes youth to be more exposed to vulnerability and precariousness compared to other groups and age brackets (Rodríguez, De-Juanas & González, 2016); bring along new demands and learnings that are required to properly interact in whichever particular context (García-Castilla & Meneses, 2009, pp. 346-347).

In this sense, different national and international institutions (European Commission, 2005) are displaying a special interest in observing the current situation of youth in advanced societies, promoting through EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 a programme of measures to create more and better opportunities for this group in areas of education and employment, as well as to foster social inclusion through the promotion of active citizenry and solidarity among young people. (Boetzelen, 2010).

At the same time a social displacement has occurred, calling into question education, leisure practices and the use of free time of youth in the face of the economic and social crisis over the past few years (Pérez & De-Juanas, 2014; INE, 2017).

Given these changes, new challenges and social difficulties have arisen, different to those which youth faced barely ten years ago. That way, new generations of young people have to live in a world where the ones who choose to study must combine it with other activities, and the ones who work tend to do it longer hours and with little or no social protection. In this world, accelerated social change, the virtual interaction are predominant, and fewer people live without the permanent company of their smartphones (Melendro, García-Castilla, & Goig, 2016). In fact, it is difficult to understand current society without *Information and communications technology*, which has

established itself as a fundamental element for social development, especially in socialization processes of youth, from a positive and resilient approach based on preventive and protection programmes and policies (Haenens, Vandoninck, & Donoso, 2013), as well as exerted its potential as a tool for empowerment (Vaquero, 2013).

At the same time, in this world, that faces environmental issues, great efforts are made for citizens to enjoy healthy spaces and to practice activities enabling the achievement of physical, psychological and social well-being (Murga-Menoyo & Novo, 2017; Caride, 2017). The institution of the family is also being transformed as a reflection of society, as well as its internal relationships, still playing a significant role in socialization and full development of youth (Agate, Zabriskie, Agate, & Poff, 2009; Caballo, Gradaille, & Merelas, 2012; Ruiz-Corbella & De-Juanas, 2013; Valdemoros-San Emeterio, Ponce de León, Sanz, & Caride, 2014; Doistua, Lázaro, & Bru, 2017).

All these conditions are affecting free time of youth and the way that they deal with it socially or individually (Cuenca & Goytia, 2012; Caride, 2012; De-Juanas & Fernández-García, 2015). Aware of these enormous challenges, in the unique context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is a need to understand that this reality has a greater impact in less prepared, vulnerable or at-risk youth (Kaztman, 2000). Professionals and researchers focused on youth and social problems are mainly concerned about education and cultural capital available for young people to properly transform the information received, which is an essential capability in this digital age (Lugo, 2015). For this reason, this monographic issue has been developed in order to tackle this topic from a particular sensitivity and a comprehensive concern for the understanding of the reality that is affecting youth and that would be invisible if it was not for the efforts of the many authors presented here. Likewise, education and leisure of vulnerable youth has also had a considerable social impact (Caballo, Varela, & Nájera, 2017; Cuenca & Madariaga, 2017; Monteagudo, Ahedo, & Ponce de León, 2017), more than any reader might think, given the situation of potential social exclusion of this specific group of people. Dealing with these situations, we consider that the opportunity for change means to seriously confront what young individuals do and how do they use their available free time in order to analyze the situation afterwards and enable the development of efficient socio-educational interventions.

Therefore, this issue of **Pedagogía Social Revista Interuniversitaria**, gathers seven original contributions about education and leisure

of vulnerable youth. The project of the monographic was born five years ago and it has been sculpted with a very defined style as a result of the joint investigation of several groups of researchers belonging to various Spanish universities' in cooperation with other foreign researchers. The list of articles presented here needed a significant amount of meetings and joint efforts in order to publish this issue. Each article of this monographic issue present the outcomes of experimental works on leisure practices of this group of people, and they are in the collective interest of social educators, although we consider the content of these papers to be interesting for everyone who intends to approach this subject, even without a scientific perspective, showing a willingness to know social reality of vulnerable youth or those groups that present a higher risk of becoming vulnerable.

To begin with, the first two articles focus on the leisure practices of vulnerable youth and its benefits for this group. The first paper, entitled "Preferences, renunciation and opportunities in leisure practices of vulnerable young people", is written by professors Francisco Javier García-Castilla and Miguel Melendro Estefanía from National University of Distance Education (UNED) in cooperation with professor Catherine Blaya from Haute École Pédagogique du Canton de Vaud (Switzerland). The authors make an in-depth study -through a questionnaire on leisure time- about the preferences, renunciations and leisure opportunities of more than 700 young students in Spain, considered as vulnerable and in the age bracket from 16 to 18 years old. The authors point that social relationships and a lack of resources affect the leisure practices of this group and emphasize leisure poverty as a feature of their situation.

The second article by Ángela L. de Valenzuela Bandín, José Antonio Caride Gómez and Rita Gradaille Pernas from University of Santiago de Compostela. "Leisure practices and its education in the processes of social inclusion: a comparative study with youth in foster care in Catalonia, Galicia and Madrid". They make an interesting contribution about the most common leisure practices in youth in foster care or formerly in foster care in Catalonia, Galicia and Madrid. The paper is the result of the doctoral thesis "Los tiempos de ocio en la vida cotidiana de la juventud en situación de riesgo y dificultad social: problemáticas específicas y alternativas pedagógico-sociales", based on a purposive sampling from all the references obtained from Federation of Entities offering Assisted Projects and Apartments (FEPA). The authors used an *ad hoc* instrument implemented to about 150 young individuals in the age bracket from 16 to

21. The outcome of this work focuses on the possibilities and limitations offered by leisure practices in the processes of social inclusion, as well as on the need to promote socio-educational initiatives with this group.

After these initial articles, two other papers related to sportive – physical activities in vulnerable youth are presented. The first one is entitled “Sports leisure in potentially vulnerable young people: perceived benefits and organization of practice”. The authors, Raúl Fragüela Vale from University of La Coruña, Ángel De-Juanas Oliva from National University of Distance Education (UNED) and Ricardo Franco Lima from Sport and Leisure Graduate School of University of Melgaço (Portugal), are aware of the vast socialising and educational power of sportive practices. They present the results of a quantitative investigation whose main target was to describe leisure habits of young people at risk of vulnerability and non-vulnerable youth. For that purpose, a questionnaire was administered to around 2700 Spanish students, and 785 were considered as participants in risk of vulnerability. The outcome obtained by the authors affirm that youth at risk of vulnerability present less active habits than non-vulnerable youth. In turn, attention is drawn to the fact that the most vulnerable youth perceived less benefits from sportive leisure practices, which might entail the need for structured socio-educational interventions in order to foster sportive leisure practices in this group.

The second article, “Time dedicated to physical-sportive leisure and time perspectives: revealing/concealing vulnerabilities”, also focuses on physical activity in youth leisure. The authors, Nuria Codina Mata and José Vicente Pestana Montesinos from University of Barcelona, along with Ana Ponce de León Elizondo from University of La Rioja, based their research on the influence exerted by the time spent practicing sportive physical leisure as well as the benefits obtained and on the time perspective in a sample of nearly 150 young individuals in the age bracket from 18 to 24 years old. Two tests were applied in order to conduct this work. First, an ad hoc questionnaire on the structure and characteristics of *Time Budget* from the contributions of Neulinger, as well as the adjustments formerly made by the authors in other studies. The second test was *Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory*, adapted to Spanish population by Díaz-Morales in 2006. The outcomes of the study revealed relationships between the variables addressed in both tests and the experience in sportive physical leisure. The authors emphasize in a higher vulnerability in girls compared to boys regarding sportive leisure practices.

After these four articles, we present the fifth, which focuses on youth leisure activities and its presence in social networks. Its title is “Leisure activities and their presence in social networks in potentially vulnerable youth” and it is written by Rosa Ana Alonso Ruíz and M. Ángeles Valdemoros-San Emeterio from University of La Rioja along with Nuria Codina Mata from Universidad of Barcelona. This article accurately conveys the importance of digital literacy, as well as the presence and diffusion in social networks of leisure activities of potentially vulnerable youth in Spain, in relation to different socio-demographic variables. The study starts from a proposal of quantitative investigation carried out on a sample of 140 students in the age bracket from 17 to 18 years old. An ad hoc questionnaire and inferential and descriptive analyses were applied. The authors stress that more than half of the participants disseminate their leisure activities in social networks. At the same time, young people living in the North and center of Spain are the ones who communicate their physical activities on social networks more often, and students living in the East of Spain disseminate their cultural experiences more frequently. The article finishes with a well-argued justification on the keys to optimize education in digital leisure of this population.

Then, the sixth article is presented as other great incentive of this monographic issue: “Leisure for vulnerable young people: importance, satisfaction and self-management”, written by professors Ana Eva Rodríguez Bravo from National University of Distance Education (UNED), Ángel Luis González Olivares from University of Castilla La Mancha and Fernando López Noguero from University Pablo de Olavide. With this study the reader will have an approach to one of the issues that have a greater impact on youth: the perceived importance of their leisure time, the entailed satisfaction and its self-management. The starting point of this work, mentioned by the authors in the beginning of the text, is the paramount analysis of whether the assessment made by vulnerable youth of their own leisure experience differs from the assessment made by non-vulnerable youth. For this purpose, the authors conduct a quantitative study with nearly 2700 participants; almost 800 were identified as vulnerable. The results obtained verify that vulnerable youth attach great importance to their leisure practices and are satisfied about it. At the same time, it is revealing that, according to this article, vulnerable youth attach less importance than non-vulnerable youth.

Finally, the monographic issue ends with the article “The professional practice of social agents in youth leisure: strategies for intervention”, written

by Fátima Poza Vilches from University of Granada, Ana Fernández García from National University of Distance Education (UNED) and João Paulo Ferreira Delgado from the Polytechnic Institute of Porto (Portugal). This article focuses on professionals on leisure of vulnerable youth. The authors tackle, from a methodologic frame focused on the qualitative investigation, the analysis of 34 professional experiences in the field of youth leisure in Spain. The work starts with a review of professional practices of social agents working in the field of leisure and youth. Subsequently, the authors present the

research methodology and the open-ended questionnaire technique used for data collection with these social agents, which presented an age bracket from 26 to 55 years old and an extensive training and with six years of professional experience, even reaching twenty years in some cases. The outcomes of the study enable authors to provide new approaches and fields of interest for socio-educational interventions from leisure and targeting vulnerable youth. They fundamentally identify eight different indicators serving as a reference in order to generate intervention strategies.

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## Note

- <sup>1</sup> The network of Spanish universities is linked to the research project “*De los tiempos educativos a los tiempos sociales: «La construcción cotidiana de la condición juvenil en una sociedad de redes. Problemáticas específicas y alternativas pedagógico-sociales»* (coordinated project EDU2012-39080-CO7-00), cofinanced within the framework of the National Plan R&D&I assisted by the Minister of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness and the European Regional Development Fund (FEDER, 2007-2013).

Ángel De-Juanas Oliva y Francisco Javier García-Castilla

