UNA ESCUELA EN CRISIS: DESAFÍOS EDUCATIVOS DESDE UNA PERSPECTIVA DE EDUCACIÓN SOCIAL
A School in Crisis: Educational Challenges from a Social Education Perspective.

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RESUMEN
Muchos autores debaten sobre la actual crisis educativa, principalmente debido a la resistencia y adaptación de las escuelas a las características y necesidades de las sociedades posmodernas. En este sentido, debemos reconocer que el fracaso educativo es un fracaso democrático.

La escuela debe ser entendida y construida teniendo en cuenta la cultura, los valores y los problemas de la sociedad actual, contando con la colaboración coordinada de todos los agentes educativos implicados en el desarrollo de la praxis educativa.

Por ello, este artículo pretende poner de manifiesto la necesidad de incorporar la figura del profesional de la Educación Social en el ámbito formal, ya que su formación puede ser fundamental para mejorar el desarrollo educativo en la escuela, actuando como agente de cambio social, interviniendo y mediando, desde una perspectiva socioeducativa, entre alumnos, familia, profesores y el entorno social próximo. Así como educar en los valores democráticos y preparar a los ciudadanos para la integración y la convivencia en democracia.

PALABRAS CLAVE
Educación social, escuela, educación reglada, educación no reglada, educador social.

ABSTRACT
Many authors debate about the current educational crisis, mainly due to the resistance and adaptation of schools to the characteristics and needs of postmodern societies. In this sense, we have to recognize that educational failure is a democratic failure.

Schools must be understood and built considering the culture, values and problems of today's society, having a coordinated collaboration of all the educational agents involved in the educational praxis development.

For this reason, this article aims to highlight the need to incorporate the figure of the Social Education professional in the formal scope, since its training can be essential to improve educational development in schools, acting as an agent of social change, intervening and mediating, from a socio-educational perspective, between students, family, teachers and the close social environment. As well as educating in democratic values and preparing citizens for integration and coexistence in democracy.

KEYWORDS
Social education, school, regulated education, non- regulated education, social educator.

1. THE SCHOOL CRISIS

Over the years, the school has played an elementary role as a socialization agent outside the family environment. It is in school, through education, where citizens develop the social competence so necessary to develop adequately in the social context.

However, nowadays, education in schools faces numerous difficulties and problems that prevent it from meeting the goals for which it was founded. In this sense, we can see how there is a mismatch between the legal regulations, the educational institutions themselves and teacher training. In addition, there are communication problems with families, conflicts in establishing social and cultural relations in the external context closest to the school, and a slower evolution compare with the current social changes.

According to Ortega (2005):

> The school has specialized and insisted on the knowledge diffusion and the search for "appropriation of culture" on the part of the subjects, and this specialization and priority has been imposed on the rest of the possible functions, aims and tasks relating to socialization, the development of the personality or the identity of the subjects (p.122).

Therefore, it is important that the school adapts to the new social orders from the innovation and redefinition of its goals. We need an education updated to the new changing needs of society and we trust that Social Education has much to contribute in this sense. In fact, there are more and more areas of professional intervention in which the social educator is working, including at school.

On the other hand, we are currently experiencing a boom in Social Education in Spain, which translates into the presence of a large number of socio-educational initiatives in different scopes, both formal and non-formal. This advance is especially significant in regulated school spaces, as professionals from the socio-educational field who work in these contexts are emerging in almost all of Europe. However, what is interesting is that these new jobs emerge because of a demand that comes from the educational community itself and from families.

This fact is understandable if we think on the different problems associated with this stage of people's educational development. Serious difficulties such as violence and harassment in classrooms, inclusion and attention to diversity, health education, sexuality or drugs are clear examples of obstacles that coexist day by day with the reality of many schools. If we add to this the fact that many teachers recognize that they lack the resources to face these situations, from a socio-educational point of view, the social educator has much to contribute.

According to this, current studies such as those of Sanmartín (2019) show the importance of the family and the school in the transmission of values and social norms. This process will establish the origin of the development of appropriate social behaviors for the improvement of coexistence and interpersonal and interrelational relationships. In this sense, it is fundamental to provide students with tools, strategies and social skills that contribute to their social adaptation (Gallardo-López & Gallardo-Vázquez, 2018).

Furthermore, according to Mesa (2019), it is urgent to reconfigure an education for global citizenship from schools, which addresses relevant issues such as "the causes and consequences related to inequality in the distribution of wealth and power in the world, as well as inequalities between men and women" (p.21), among other issues such as, for example, cultural diversity, the manifestation of violence or climate change.

Today, we live social moments characterized by a great variety and complexity of problems, situations and processes, both personal and group and community. Today's society is trying to overcome a deep crisis in all aspects, but especially those related to democratic values or the welfare state. If we pause for a moment to analyze the values that dominate our society, we can see that individualism prevails over communitarian-

ism, as well as success and the acquisition of financial capital quickly, forgetting the constant effort and sacrifice to achieve the proposed goals. In addition, there is a promotion of consumerism and the possibility against need, over sustainability and recycling, giving priority to the market over the political or public (Sánchez-Valverde, 2014). In this sense, the sociocommunity sphere is characterized by different interconnected variables, necessarily conceived from the point of view of complexity and interrelation.

If we focus on the school and its context, we can see how these social circumstances we are referring to directly affect it. Therefore, formal education encompasses a changing, complex reality with diverse problems that, inevitably, must be addressed. In accordance with this, it is important to address these school problems through creativity, reconsidering and modifying the teaching function, incorporating new professional profiles of the socio-educational field and, fundamentally, taking as a starting point the real needs of the current school, a complex school with a multidimensional character where Social Education has much to contribute.

2. EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES OF 21ST CENTURY SOCIETY: SOCIAL EDUCATION

The society of the 21st century is characterized by a series of events that make sense, and are explained, in the context in which they appear. In this sense, we have to be conscious that it is the own society that, in some way, provides the appearance of diverse realities, and the one that can give convenient answers to the needs that it itself demands (López-Noguero, 2001, 2003). Thereby, in this current social context, the perspective of Social Education becomes a very powerful fundamental tool and, in a certain way, inconceivable until recently. However, the fast-social changes base and justify the presence of Social Education in the educational scope.

In this sense:

The information society in which we are beginning to be immersed, a network society, a society of migrations, a "globalized" and complex society, is forcing us to rethink education, educational praxis and its institutions to, in some way, understand and explain the new transformations and to be able to reformulate their structures and new interventions (Ortega, 2005, p.113).

The causes that explain these exceptional social changes are diverse, and a large number of them are not directly related to Pedagogy. In this regard, we must have in mind that Social Education did not originate spontaneously, it originated from certain social features, characterized by important transformations in the economy, politics, principles, social relations and participation and education, together with a technological revolution and an increase in leisure and free time (López-Noguero & Pérez Serrano, 2012).

On the other hand, Social Pedagogy originated due to the emergence of new social policies that strengthened the democratic system, the increase in marginality and exclusion of certain sectors of the population, the appearance of new pedagogical theories and, above all, as a result of a deep educational crisis (Gallardo-Vázquez & Gallardo-López, 2012; Petrus, 1997; López-Noguero, 2004).

Consequently, postmodern societies require their citizens to be people with autonomy and with the capacity to integrate and adapt to uncertainty. To this end, continuous education is essential, allowing the acquisition of social skills that encourage adaptation and projection at different levels: personal, professional and social. According to Gallardo-Vázquez & Gallardo-López (2011a), "the person constitutes a whole and his social formation includes the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects that the condition of person itself, both at an interpersonal level and at a citizen level" (p.35). In this sense, Social Education has much to contribute when it raises new perspectives for the edu-

cational and formative activity of individuals in society with "a strong orientation of value, which guides personal identity and which marks not only priorities, beliefs and attitudes but also social behaviors" (De la Caba-Collado, López-Atxurra & Bobowik, 2016, p.190).

It is important to understand that, behind the poor development of educational training in schools, with consequences such as school failure and school drop-out, there are surely hidden "personal and social problems, of which schools are often unaware or unwilling to take into account, because of the demands they place on their academic work" (Vega, 2013, p.2). According to this, Rodríguez & Guzmán (2019) warn of the importance of being able to detect, at an early stage from schools, the variables that can identify students at risk, in order to carry out socio-educational interventions that increase the chances of success of these students.

Other sort of studies such as those made by Merma-Molina, Ávalos & Martínez (2019), analyze the importance of coexistence plans in Spanish schools, they question the effectiveness of meeting their objectives and propose strategies and recommendations for improvement. Among these proposals, it is interesting to observe how the figure of a social education professional can contribute to promote the development of educational actions related to conflict resolution and education in democratic principles.

According to Petrus (2004), learning is a personal and social process that occurs from multiple dimensions and cannot occur if we separate social education from school education. In this sense, "the school cannot be closed in on itself and adopt an autistic attitude towards society and its problems. The school institution must develop educational activities beyond the topics of the curriculum" (p.98). Therefore, it is necessary to intervene in schools starting from the needs of the students, emphasizing the learning of skills that allow for the development of critical thinking, reflection, empathy, the capaci-

ty to manage conflicts, as well as promote a creativity that enables the analysis of reality from diverse perspectives (Gallardo-Vázquez & Gallardo-López, 2010).

In short, education is a social practice of a transforming nature that seeks to build a more just and egalitarian society, and this requires that educational practice integrate the perspective of social education into schools (Mesa, 2019). In this sense, according to Martín-Bermúdez (2019), social education should have a principal role in promoting a type of "transformative education and active citizenship since it is based on the relationship between a theory, a method and a practice related to quality of life, which is also close to the daily experience of the collectives" (p.160).

3. CONCLUSIONS

The reality of this society in this century, so highly multidimensional, globalized, variable, and complex, demands a new way of understanding education, with a much more social approach and closer to democratic reality, and the school must adapt to both.

The school must not only tend towards a new redefinition of its social mission, but must also face, in a decisive way, profound and radical transformations both in content and in infrastructure, media and teaching methodologies, teacher training and, especially, the reorganization of the educational system, since the school must finally go beyond the limits of its walls and open up to society.

The school cannot remain today in the simple transmission of culture or knowledge, it must be demanded it for more, since it is increasingly necessary that it also deals with issues such as social integration and democratic coexistence, promoting responsibility, participation, respect for people rights, the critical sense or education in values, and articulating the greatest possible diversity of cooperation channels between all parties involved in education, mainly family, professionals and social environment.

As we face this major challenge, Social Education can and must undoubtedly help in this exciting but complex task for the school institution (López-Noguero, 2017) by supporting social diagnosis, working on prevention, mediation, intervention in issues such as bullying, violent outbreaks, unwanted pregnancies or drug addictions; as well as monitoring other conflictive situations in the classroom and its surroundings, the development of activities to educate in values, communication with families and the social environment (Páez-Gallego, Gallardo-López, López-Noguero & Rodrigo-Moriche, 2020).

Traditionally, Social Education has been understood as viable in the non-formal scope of education, not in the scope of formal education. In addition, several authors such as Petrus (1997) already defined Social Education with a markedly out-of-school character, exempt from responsibilities in school activity. However, the main current pedagogical currents do not agree with this idea.

Within the framework of a new social context, characterized by different cultural principles, new types of social awareness and patterns of action, new social policies and an increase in marginalized sectors of the population that draw new realities and problems, the need arises for education to acquire a reformulation and innovation in its goals, functions, characteristics and processes. In this sense, following Sanvisens (1995), we can say that education today must be reformulated as a social activity, with a permanent function, configured as an open system and accessible to marginal and problematic sectors. To achieve this goal, the school has to rethink its role in society, innovate in its methodology and redirect its organization, its educational agents and its resources.

Certainly, Social Education has been outside the realm of school education for too long. In fact, traditionally, Social Education has been identified as informal, not regulated. In this sense, and according to Pérez Serrano (2003), these terminologies have negative connotations when compared to formal education.

In top of it, in general terms, school education has focused its main goals on the transmission of knowledge and culture. On many occasions, social functions are left aside, and "the educational purpose of compulsory education is to encourage children to learn the skills necessary to live and integrate into society in a critical and creative way" (MEC, 1989, p.78).

Therefore, it is also necessary for school education to focus on aspects such as social integration and democratic coexistence. According to this aspect, we believe that it is time for schools to face profound changes in their contents, infrastructures, methodologies and teacher training, but, above all, the schools need to become a learning community open to society. To this end, we trust that Social Education must form part of this educational reconsideration in schools with a leading and significant role.

In this sense, Sáez (2019) argues:

> *The inclusion of social education within the school framework is associated with its contribution to the development of the socialization process in which the school institution is an outstanding and important agency of secondary socialization and, consequently, social education can facilitate and channel, adequately, the development of the processes of relationship and communication with all the members that compose the educational community (p.18).*

Without doubt, Social Education can bring many benefits shared with education in schools such as the development of responsibility, education in values, the promotion of critical sense and respect for the rights of all people, among others benefits. In addition, Social Education allows individuals to integrate and relate to society in an appropriate manner, and to be able to transform it in order to improve it (López-Noguero, 2006; Gallardo-Vázquez & Gallardo-López, 2011b; Cárdenas & López-Noguero, 2007).

Following Ortega (2005), social education can establish a connection that greatly fa-

vors "the relationship between the community, the family and the school, since they have the power to add more neutral perspectives and new cooperation methodologies" (p.13), helping to contribute to establishing an appropriate balance in power distribution and decision-making.

In summary, the overall goal of Social Education is help individuals to get into society with a civic sense and community awareness. In this aspect, Social Education purpose is to provide with educational resources to society and it individuals, so that, through educational actions, people can socialize and grow in every aspects of their lives. That is why, from schools, social educators have much to contribute.

Below is a table summarizing the functions and activities carried out by social educators in schools in Spain today, functions and activities that are becoming increasingly important in schools.

Table 1. Functions and activities of the Social Educator in schools. Source: prepared from Menacho (2013) & VV. AA (2004)

FUNCTION	ACTIVITIES
Educational and re-educational.	Monitoring and control of situations of absenteeism, school failure and violence.
Informative, advisory and orienting to individuals, groups and families.	Promotion of the participation of families in the daily life of the center and in Parents' Schools.
Socio-cultural animation and dynamization of groups and collectives.	Development of social skills. Planning, coordination and development of complementary and extracurricular activities, in coordination with the AMPA (Spanish acronym for Parents of student Association) or the school board. Contextualized socio-cultural activities that improve center-environment relations and encourage the creation of stable communication networks.
Organizer, planning, programming, development and evaluation of your socio-educational intervention.	Development and evaluation of integration and coexistence programs. Design and planning of information, guidance and counselling programs for students. Support for teacher training.
Management and administration of different social and educational services.	Participation in counselling, training and parent association programs.
Observation and detection of the needs and characteristics of the environment of groups and individuals.	Monitoring and collaboration in the educational response to students with problematic behaviors. Follow-up of conflictive situations in classrooms and their surroundings. Detection of the socio-educational needs of the center and its surroundings, participating in the programming of the Guidance Department.
Relationship and coordination with other social and educational institutions.	Establishment of networks between the center and the immediate environment, breaking the isolation and institutional loneliness of the school.
Preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects, programs, services, campaigns, community intervention, etc.	Collaboration in the development of education programs for health, environment, consumption, tolerance, equality and peace education, among others.

In short, formal educational institutions, mainly schools, have to train for integration and coexistence in democracy. Bearing in mind that society is becoming more and more complex, multicultural and globalized, building a flexible and dynamic school open to the social and educational community. In order to achieve this goal, the socio-educational model must be able to establish cooperative relationships between students, teachers, families and various institutions and professional profiles, all from the contextualization of the social environment of the learner.

The school is undergoing an important transformation in order to adapt to the fast changes in today's society, and, within this framework, the Social Education professional, through multidisciplinary work, is acquiring an increasingly transcendental protagonism, since he carries out very significant tasks in schools such as mediation and conflict resolution, prevention, education in values, social diagnosis, family education, coordination of transversal curricular themes and immediate action in the face of social problems (López-Noguero 2006).

The school is a clear reflection of society; it is in changing and in continuous progress. In this sense, social issues such as the incorporation of immigrants, new ways of understanding family models or technological progress require schools to offer socio-educational responses to possible problems that may arise. For this reason, Social Education professionals constitute a fundamental part of the educational community in schools, since they provide a complementary vision to the academic, adapting to the specific needs of students and the school community, and giving "a response to diverse needs of socio-educational intervention" (Galán, 2008, p. 57).

The incorporation of the social education professional in the regulated educational contexts is already a reality in Spain. If the function of the school "is eminently educational, its task has to complement the educational action of the teachers inside and outside the school" (Vega, 2013, p.5), using social education as a resource. Following Dapía & Fernandez (2018), we can identify three figures of the Social Educator in schools in Spain: a) the social educator who is part of the human resources of the regulated educational center, b) the one who belongs to the municipal Social Services and c) the one who leads projects of socio-educational intervention through intermediary entities.

According to Galán (2019), although the figure of the social educator in schools is more and more frequent in Spain, it continues to be a socio-educational practice that is not very widespread. Only some Autonomous Region such as Castilla La Macha, Andalusia, Aragon, Galicia, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands or the Canary Islands have incorporated, in a significant and successful way, the complement that social education can offer to the current educational system. However, in order for social education to be truly considered at a national level, "it is necessary to have the support of the General Council of Colleges of Social Educators and to support their struggle to achieve a state social education law" (p.80).

Authors such as Bretones, Solé, Meneses, Castillo & Fàbregues (2019), recognize that, to this day, school educational spaces continue to focus very much on teaching in the classroom. However, the appearance and diversification of new educational agents in the centers, who intervene in an increasingly complex reality, is becoming more and more necessary. Thus, the professional of social education can come to establish:

> *Intercultural bridges that reinforce social cohesion and the recognition of diversity; the promotion of the participation of families, students and other educational and social agents in the territory in the school environment, or the activation of specific campaigns for coexistence, equality and the promotion of democratic values and respect in order to strengthen spaces for coexistence among the various components of the school community (p. 40).*

It is also interesting to highlight some Spanish experiences on social education practices associated with improving education in formal contexts such as Mayor, Lòpez & Solís (2019), which focuses on training to continue disseminating, promoting and institutionalizing the practice of Service-Learning in teachers, which is an educational proposal that combines learning processes and service to the community in a single well-articulated project where participants learn by working on real needs of the environment in order to improve it (Mayor & Rodríguez, 2016).

On the other hand, Serrate, González & Olmos (2017), carry out a study to find out which professionals are doing socio-educational work in Spanish secondary schools, what problems and needs they have to address, what functions they have and what difficulties they encounter in their daily work, seeking to highlight the importance of social education work carried out on the basis of interdisciplinary proposals. Likewise, we can find studies such as those of Sierra, Vila, Caparrós & Martín (2017), which analyze the functions of the social educator and the development of the figure of the social educator in the school.

Addressing an international perspective on research and experiences related to the relations between school and social education, we can find studies such as Alonso-Tapia, Simón, López-Valle, Ulate & Biehl (2019), where they analyze the climate of coexistence in the classroom in favor of the social inclusion of students from two countries, Spain and Costa Rica. Or successful socio-educational experiences (Yadreev, Filippov, Burnashev & Migalkin, 2018), within the framework of school sports, to develop an advanced social education program designed to promote the international sports movement, healthy lifestyles, competencies and health skills.

Other current studies focus their goals to analyze the scientific production of referent authors such as Nel Noddings, seeking to approximate the implications for social education in terms directly related to the school subject (Thornton, 2018).

Among other works of an international nature, we can highlight an innovative proposal in Costa Rica, which addresses teacher training to face the challenges of contemporary educational models in formal and non-formal areas of primary education from the field of social education (Barberousse-Alfonso, Vargas-Dengo & Corrales-Bastos, 2018). Finally, Neumann (2017) carry out another interesting proposal, which with its study seeks to better understand the relationship between social education programs in public schools in the United States and the health of their democracy, obtaining results that invite critical reflection on how to approach social education in schools.

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