

# ECSWR 2021

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5 - 7 May 2021 • **Virtual Conference**

Social Work Research: Contributing to Innovations in Practice, Policy and Social Development



### BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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### 01314 - THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN COMMUNITIES OF HIGH CULTURAL DIVERSITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

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#### Background and purpose

The arrival of immigrant population to the Valencian Community (Spain) in the last decades has increased the preexisting diversity generating multicultural communities that pose important challenges for social development.

This work aims to analyze and encourage participation in communities of high diversity, alleviating the problems of forced coexistence between immigrants and natives, and doing so from a methodology in which both are active subjects with the ability to analyze their reality to transform it collectively.

To achieve this objective, between 2010 and 2018 an investigation was carried out in three high diversity neighborhoods: Carrús (Elche), La Coma and Santa Rita (Paterna).

#### Methods

The methodology used was based on participatory action research (PAR) that poses a spiral of phases, where each one is related to the following:

- Establishment of collaborative relationships.
- Participatory analysis of reality.
- Design and implementation of the community program.
- Participatory evaluation.

The participants were organized in two levels: 1) who formed the research group (selected for their special knowledge of reality); 2) the rest of the members of the community who were consulted and informed periodically. The levels were open, there was an exchange of people between them.

In the collection of information: 1) different participatory techniques were used such as colloquiums, mapping or participatory surveys, among others; 2) there was a professional team in each neighborhood that, in addition to supporting the motor group in data collection, facilitated participation, reflection and cooperation among all actors.

Regarding the analysis of the information, software was created to organize a multiplicity of reports on participation based on variables such as cultural diversity, age or sex.

#### Findings

This PAR experience managed to articulate around a shared objective of social development to the main actors of the communities. Thus, 68.3% of the social actors identified were involved in the improvement of their reality, which in absolute terms implies the active participation of 423 entities and / or groups.

It is important to highlight the level of adherence of the educational and health centers. Specifically, 64.7% of schools, 87.5% of institutes and 100% of health centers actively participated in the different initiatives.

1.775 meetings and 599 activities were held, with an approximate total of 30.000 participants, stimulating positive interaction between culturally differentiated people whose first consequence was conflict prevention, together with increasing the feeling of belonging to the community.

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### **Conclusions and implications**

The PAR applied to pluricultural communities helps to undo the dichotomy between immigrant and native, promoting a new framework to address social development from a global approach, in which each community investigates how to improve their situation and what are the priority issues.

The practice of Social Work in this type of communities requires slow rhythms and long looks, the development of intercultural skills, stable structures of intersectoral coordination, as well as the participation of diverse citizens in social policies and services.

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