

How and Why to make inclusion the main aim of extracurricular-activities.

Guillem Cremades Martí
Supervisor: Cristina Corcoll López

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to discuss the role of extracurricular activities in achieving an inclusive practice and their optimal application. It is divided in two sections. First, it provides factual knowledge about the existing benefits of these out-of-school practices, as well as engages in a discussion about the advantages of the multiple types of activities and the unequal accessibility to all children. Secondly, it studies national and worldwide models towards inclusion, which join these activities in the search for the adequate way of applying them. The purpose of the current study is to provide a fuller, more reliable picture of this important phenomenon than previous ones.

This work is accomplished via interviews, which provide qualitative results to get closer to nowadays reality and contribute to different perspectives towards extracurricular activities, specially in more vulnerable areas.

After obtaining the data and analysing it, we can conclude that out-of-school practices encounter many difficulties not only in the extracurricular activities in-situ but in the accessibility to them. In this sense, these lack of accessibility was found to have a huge impact in the making of an inclusive practice. Therefore, guidelines have been elaborated in order to aid both educational institutions and educators, foster inclusion since the very beginning.

Key words

Extracurricular activities, Inclusive education, Accessibility, Educació 360, Pay-to-play fee, Engagement, Diversity

Resum

Aquest article pretén debatre el rol de les activitats extraescolars per afavorir una pràctica inclusiva i obtenir una aplicació òptima. Es divideix en dos grans seccions. La primera proporciona coneixements contrastats sobre els beneficis existents d'aquestes pràctiques extraescolars, a la vegada que participa en un debat sobre els avantatges dels diferents tipus d'activitats existents, així com l'accessibilitat desigual pels infants. En segon lloc, l'article considera models inclusius en l'àmbit nacional i internacional, que serveixen de guia per les activitats extraescolars en la recerca de la forma adequada d'aplicar-les.

Aquest estudi té lloc a través d'entrevistes, que comporten resultats de caràcter qualitatiu, que permeten acostar-nos a la realitat actual i contribueix a múltiples perspectives pel que fa a les activitats extraescolars, especialment en zones vulnerables.

Després d'obtenir les dades i d'analitzar-les, podem concloure que les pràctiques extraescolars presenten múltiples dificultats més enllà de la mateixa activitat, com l'accessibilitat a aquestes pràctiques. En aquest sentit, la falta d'accessibilitat té un impacte molt gran en l'elaboració d'una pràctica inclusiva. Així doncs, hi ha hagut l'elaboració de directrius per tal d'ajudar tant institucions educatives com educadors a afavorir la inclusió des dels seus inicis.

Paraules clau

Activitats extraescolars, Educació Inclusiva, Accessibilitat, Educació 360, Quota de participació, Compromís, Diversitat

Introduction

It has been established that children's involvement in extracurricular activities can change their lives completely. Being part of these practices can have many benefits, from mainly academical ones to long-life lessons. Zaff et al. (2003) stated that "involvement in extracurricular activities predicts higher grades, enrollment, greater self-discipline, self-esteem (...) and lower risky behavior such as drug use, delinquency and lower truancy rates". (pp. 599-630)

Yet, is this applicable on every individual? According to experts "low-income students are increasingly being excluded from participating in extracurricular activities" (Snellman et al., 2015, p.7), which limitates children potential according to their economy. This said, governmental institutions are making it difficult for all the students to have the same backup.

A recent survey by the University of Michigan C.S. Moot Children's Hospital (2012), stated that 61 percent of middle and high school students nationwide were charged a pay-to-play fee. Unfortunately, this affects families unequally. It creates a socio-economic gap, so those families with the financial means are able to sign their kids up for extracurricular programs, leaving lower status families unable to participate and access the benefits of said programs.

Therefore, it is crucial to provide a pathway for all children to access these programs regardless of their families ability to pay. Giving all children the opportunity to reap the benefits now and throughout their lives. In this article, the research will analyse multiple educational realities for comparison to find the optimal method of applying after school activities.

Theoretical framework

Inclusion: benefits and the growing inequality gap within society

Educational leisure time has been identified by literature and international organisms, such as The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) or Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as an element of impact on the cognitive and social development of children, specially for those from disadvantaged environments. Unfortunately, there is an enormous gap among children due to aspects such as their birthplace or their economic conditions, which may dictate a life sentence.

On one hand, UNESCO recognises the necessity of promoting complementary programs which can attend to the basic necessities of children with difficulties in their assistance to their formal education.

Coherently to the presented ideas, Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP, 2008) has listed the different outcomes associated with participation in after-school programs. Not only does it take into account academic, social/emotional issues and prevention but also health and wellness issues. To begin with, participation in schools elicits better attitudes towards school and higher educational aspirations. Besides that, it also benefits higher school attendance rates, less disciplinary action and engagement in learning, among others. In reference to the social outcomes, this study confirms these out-of-school models evoke decreased behavioral problems as well as improved social and communication skills, increased self-confidence and development of initiative. (pp. 2-5)

Following up the HFRP outcomes, extracurricular activities are said to have a huge impact on prevention, by inferring the avoidance of drug use, the reduction of delinquency rates and an increased knowledge of safe sex. In the same line, these practices foster wellness, through inducing better food choices, the increase of physical activities and raising awareness on nutrition and health practices. (HFRP, 2008)

In view of this, Snellman et al. (2015) confirm the importance of extracurricular activities for all children. After interviewing 120 students, she states that extracurricular activities help cultivate the skills, connections and knowledge that prepare children for lifelong success (pp. 7-9), in the direction of the HFRP. Moreover, she ratifies the increasing exclusion of low-income students from participating in these activities, which should empower the will for change.

With regard to the above mentioned, we can agree there is an accessibility problem in the educational field. How come extracurricular activities be that beneficial and unequal at the same time? Why do some children have more opportunities than others? In this sense, education must fight in order to equip all the children with the same opportunities and be able to finish the existing disparities. This has led to accessibility being put in the eye of education. Much of this current issue about growing inequality in education outcomes has focused on the widening achievement gap between students from high-income and low-income families. For instance, there is existing evidence that students who hold leadership positions in high school are able to command higher salaries later in life (Kuhn & Weinberger, 2005). Thus, middle-class parents groom their children from an early age to excel in competitive after-school activities like soccer, chess, and dance (Levey Friedman, 2013). This evidence depicts the unfairness for disadvantaged families, who can not help their children to participate, and therefore cannot benefit from the mentioned profits.

Even further, according to Snellman et al. (2015), a lot of schools have had a budget cut, which has been solved in 2 different ways. It was either reduce the number of sports offered or put a higher price, which was generally the most common solution.

At the outset, an increasing number of low income students find themselves left on the sidelines and can't take profit from the numerous benefits of these out-of-school practices, creating a long life impact on children, which should be alarming for worldwide organisms and entities.

Which extracurricular activities should we choose and why?

A huge amount of families find themselves uncertain about the extracurricular practices their children should take part in. A part of them decide to sign them up into several out-of-school activities while others decide not to have them participate in these type-like practices. Sadly, extracurricular activities have been treated as a non-educational matter, while it should have the same importance as the ordinary education. In relation with this idea, parents are unaware of the particular and diverse benefits of the different types of extracurricular activities and choose their children's after-school activities following their own criteria. That said, what should parents lay on when signing in their children?

According to Torres (as cited in Monclús, 2019), Doctor of Pedagogy, the first issue to take into account when signing up children for extracurricular activities, is their personal desires for participation, plus their academic needs as students. Torres does not specifically mention social relationships as an essential pillar when choosing an activity, but the mental and physical deficiencies the children might have, such as motor function, focusing and self-control.

Alternatively, Roca (as cited in Monclús, 2019), from Eixos Creativa, an educational services company that offers artistic, technological and creative activities for schools, considers that we must take into account the value of these activities (emotional, social, educational...) and the effect these have on children.

From a different perspective, Cladellas (as cited in Monclús, 2019), UAB professor, recommends doing a maximum of 2 activities a week, and preferably to choose both cognitive and physical activities. Equally, if there is only the possibility to take part in one of them, it is preferable to choose the physical option, in order to reduce mental exhaustion in the children. This overstimulation happens due to working on equivalent exercises to the ordinary education, which can contribute to fatigue, certainly counterproductive for children. On the other hand, not participating in physical extracurricular activities can lead to negative effects on children, giving more credit to physical activities before cognitive ones.

Concerning physical activities, researchers have found these to be profitable for children:

A higher degree of well-being in students that practice sports has been observed by Dimech and Seiler (2011), along with some interesting benefits, like preventing

delinquency (Gardner, Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2011), having higher school marks (Cladellas et al., 2013; Cladellas et al., 2015) or having more opportunities for social interaction (Schafaer, Simpkins, Svest & Price, 2011).

It is also worth noting that physical activities reduce stress, anxiety and depression, and improves learning and memory. These effects combination “not only makes people healthier, but it also supports a higher school performance” (Pastor, Gil, Tortosa & Martínez, 2012).

While physical activities seem to be in the center of extracurricular practices, there are some growing institutions trying to enlighten new practices, claimed to accentuate innovation and practical activities for kids. This is the case of Antoni Brusi school, from Barcelona, which is starting to implement progressive activities, such as robotics or animation.

Besides, school Lluís Domènech i Montaner, in Canet de Mar, joins this approach by organising free scientific workshops, which are meant to be practical and engaging for the students.

International models for inclusion

There are many models which are trying to make education visible in all the existing environments in society, from the schools to the streets and community infrastructures.

So are Community schools, located in North America. The stated represent a place-based school improvement strategy in which schools partner with community agencies and local government to provide an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement.

Among its different features, Community schools are defined by integrated student supports, expanded learning time, as well as family and community engagement and ultimately a collaborative leadership.

According to the Coalition for Community schools (2019):

“A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Community schools offer a personalized curriculum that emphasizes real-world learning and community problem-solving. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone – all day, every day, evenings and weekends” (What is a Community School? section, para. 1).

Particularly, Harmon Johnson is an example of a Community School, which with a 98% poverty rate and 70% English Language Learners, had the highest 3-year growth on California's Academic Performance Index and one of the highest attendance rates of any school in its district. What's more, parent volunteerism has increased by 500% in the past seven years and their engagement has made the school safer and improved its climate, plus parents led the school district to invest an additional \$1.4 million in the school instead of closing it as originally planned. In this vein, parent activism has also led the city to shut down a hazardous adjacent housing complex and create safer routes to the school. All things considered, we can wind up by saying the main four features have been far exceeded, favouring a much more inclusive community learning area.

Action plans in Catalunya

As seen internationally, there are different models which try to implement inclusion as a way of living in society. Indeed, there has been the birth of different programs nationwide, which try to pursue the same objective. One of these programs is called "Educació 360", which sees 2023 as its horizon for changes to be undertaken in the educational field.

Educació 360 is an education initiative, as well as social and political, which tries to foster a change in the educational model in order to integrate learning at every time and space in people's life, making a connection between schools, families and every active part of the society. Similarly to Community schools, this search for a holistic education lies on different vectors, such as generating more and better educational opportunities, making connections between curricular and extracurricular education, promoting equity and opportunities for all and finally yet importantly developing a collaborative and communitary logic. The latter understood as a converging educational process, in which all the agents in the community search for a common objective.

As already stated, society tends to think of education as a process which takes place merely in schools, whilst there are non-curricular spaces with as much educational value as schools themselves. Regrettably, the existing inequity in the ordinary education settles down in the non-curricular education time. In Catalonia, Síndic de Greuges (2014) stated there is unequal access to leisure educational time. According to ExpandEd Schools (2017), for 12-year-old students there has been a learning gap of 6000 hours of difference between the children who have more opportunities and the ones without. This gap comes from the lack of access to the entirety of the children to enriched learning that happens beyond the traditional school. (The Learning Gap section)

For instance, more than half the hours (3060) are spent by children with more opportunities in after-school activities. What's more, 1080 hours are included in summer camp activities.

In seeking solutions, Educació 360 wants to implement 9 proposals, including 36 different measures, from 2019 until 2023 in Girona. Among these 9 proposals, there is a specific measure called "Universalització, inclusió i equitat" (Universalisation, inclusion and equity), which tries to work on inequity within children. First, this measure would try to universalise all the educational services, by enhancing the council budget in the educational field, providing quality opportunities to children. Also, more resources and budget will take place in this action plan, with the collaboration of private initiatives. Establishing prices according to the purchasing power of the population would also be taken into account, as well as a rising of the dining, extracurricular and holidays grants, contributing to a higher accessibility.

In this sense, a focus of study will be, among others, the progression towards the universalization of extracurricular activities, such as music, sports, languages, arts, leisure time, weekend activities and holiday activities. This strategy tries to guarantee quality in all the ambits and territories, as well as the proper resources and mechanisms budget to assure a complete accessibility.

Also, the budget increase, in municipal terms, must allow to put Girona over the Catalan average in municipal expense per citizen in education, which has its maximum in 2017 (76,97 euros) making Girona the biggest county in terms of spending on education per capita.

What's more, beyond dining grants, the government will study the deployment of grants for school supplies, extracurricular activities, or holiday activities, among others, which has been an issue for many years in society.

Among other programs, we may find Baobab, which was initiated by "Ajuntament de Barcelona" in 2016, with the objective of consolidating leisure time in high-priority districts in order to respond to the existing necessities of children. From this year to 2018, it has made a difference on 11 different Barcelona districts. To makes thing happen, this program leans on many entities, such as federations and leisure time institutions, such as Children's club, which work hand to hand with "Ajuntament de Barcelona". Indeed, there is a net of key entities to this project, from "*Institut de cultura de Barcelona* (ICUB), "Institut municipal de Serveis Socials (IMSS), "Consell de la joventut de Barcelona (CJB), and several schools from every district, which contribute to this common objective.

Their contribution takes four different ways of acting. First of all, there is the guidance and support in creating leisure time institutions on the multiple districts. Baobab wants to

strengthen the existing educational leisure time experiences. Also, this program seeks to foster the training on leisure time, for more people to be part of it with a training. Last, there is the creation of camps for children in August to have a way of being part of the community even out of school time.

Additionally, Fundació Jaume Bofill (2019), has started a debate on whether the school schedules are the most adequate for children. This debate was endorsed by Sintès (2015), who declared the following: “Evidence on other communities and countries prove that, when morning-schools find themselves closed in the afternoon, there is the boost of inequity and it is especially damaging for disadvantaged students” (p. 85-86).

Furthermore, the current schedule is said to have many disadvantages for education. These disadvantages respond to a methodology of educating, which is not significant for children. Also, the current system provides little autonomy to teachers to adapt their time towards the individual and collective learning needs of their students. Needless to say, the current schedule does not adapt to the personalised necessities of children, as they must start and leave schools at the same time. What’s more, lunchtime is said to be too long because it makes the after-school activities start later, which delays children’s arrival at home. In general, the inflexibility of the school schedule makes it difficult to implement changes to methodology, contents and the learning environments, and does not fully protect kids’ rights.

In order to face the stated issues, this foundation proposes 12 different well-founded variables in order to create a well-rounded education. There are many issues to be improved, from opening time, leisure time, meal time, as well as a personalization of schedules, which could make a significant change in the educational field.

The research conducted during the elaboration of the theoretical framework has been helpful in order to clarify the objectives of this paper. Said aims will be the references when making further research and investigation, by conditioning the participants and instruments to be taken into account. The objectives will be presented shortly in the following section.

Objectives

Taking into consideration the importance of out-of-school practices beyond ordinary education as a way of giving children the same opportunities, three objectives have been formulated:

Understand the nature of extracurricular activities and the different action plans nationwide.

Analyse the different models and strategies in order to foster social inclusion in extracurricular activities.

Propose an optimal model to foster inclusion in the extracurricular practice.

Method

This paper is developed through a qualitative methodology, hence there is a descriptive analysis, elaborated after conducting the interviews. It enables the researcher to describe different perspectives among the extracurricular activities in vulnerable districts and to get better well-founded statements on the topic from the experts interviewed.

Participants: Ramon Cladellas, UAB professor; Jordi Díaz, PSITIC member and Laia Serraima and Raul Jimenez, extracurricular coordinators from Associació Esportiva Ciutat Vella (AECV) and 7 d'Aventura.

Instruments: There has been the elaboration of an interview with three different versions, to be answered by the experts. Ramon Cladellas answered to a personalised interview, with the objective of collecting data regarding the extracurricular activities typologies. The second interviewee, Jordi Díaz was asked about the importance of inclusive practices in vulnerable areas and, finally, Laia Serraima and Raul Jimenez, took part in an interview concerning the functioning of AECV and 7 d'Aventura.

Procedure: All the interviews were arranged via email with the different participants. While Ramon Cladellas was spotted through investigation and the reading of academic articles, all the other interviewees (Jordi Diaz, Laia Serraima and Raul Jimenez) were either suggested by university professors or known by people from my social circle.

Once arranged, the interviews with Diaz and Cladellas took place in their workspace, with their previous agreement. Similarly, the two other interviews were carried out through video chatting, consequently being voice recorded, and once again with their agreement.

Ethical conditions

Throughout the years, there has been the writing of several ethical codes to be taken into account when taking part in scientific research. During this whole process, I commit myself to work in a responsible and coherent way, which starts from making participants conscious of their participation in this research, avoiding exposing them to acts which could harm them, as well as not invading their privacy. In this way, participants must be anonymous and there is the need for the investigator to use confidentiality with the information obtained. Also, this information should be treated in an objective way, without misrepresenting the presented ideas. What's more, participants must be told the objectives of the project.

Needless to say, during this research some values must remain unchangeable, such as mutual respect, solidarity, people's dignity and a discrimination-free investigation. Obviously, this includes the abstention from literally copying other research works, using other authors' quotes without using the adequate references, or taking profit of an author's intellectual property without his/her permission.

Apart from scientific authors, when research takes place in schools, it is essential to ask for permission to headmasters and treat information carefully, without mistreating children's rights.

Design limitations

After the writing of the theoretical framework, I have been able to identify several limitations in the designing of this research, which are considered relevant when interpreting the final obtained conclusions and towards future field-related investigations. Referring to the generalisation of results, it is essential to clarify that final results and discoveries try to contribute to the complete and coherent understanding of the different analysed data, consequently making these results only valid taking into account the circumstances where this latter take place. Despite this, should readers themselves determine the legitimacy of results in other particular contexts.

In addition, the sample might be limited, which answers to the aim of achieving a more profound analysis from a more controlled group of participants.

Results and discussion

Regarding aim 1: “Understand the nature of extracurricular activities and the different action plans nationwide”, most of it has been dealt with in the theoretical framework above. However, in the conducted interview with Professor Cladellas, when asked about the educational purpose of out-of-schools activities, he started a new discussion: “Jo no crec que mai la intenció hagi estat educar. Sempre ha estat una: que els pares puguin deixar els fills.”¹

This idea contributes to a rethinking of the extracurricular activities, which are usually a way to have children under control during parents’ working schedule instead of actually giving an educational opportunity for children. Certainly, parents’ schedules are most of the time incompatible with their children’s, which leads families to sign their children up in extracurricular activities. Although this may not seem an issue, the problem starts the moment parents choose their children’s activity without thinking about its pros and cons and their educational accent. With that said, why do parents seem not to give the same attention to extracurricular activities than ordinary education? Are extracurricular activities still seen as mere leisure activities? Is education strictly related to the things happening inside a classroom?

The same author also develops an interesting idea: “Hi ha esports on no té cabuda la inclusió.”² To exemplify this idea, we shall look at the differences between chess and football, for instance. The first presents characteristics that make it more inclusive for its participants, while the second usually is more likely to segregate in a higher grade.

This reported statement shed new light to an important question: What has a higher influence on inclusion; the legal regulation of the activity or the teaching methodologies used in it?

Overall, the results indicate that the strategies and resources used may have a big influence in the making of an inclusive activity, but there is no inclusion if its regulation does not imply all the children. Díaz states: “Quan deixa de ser inclusiu el futbol? Quan no barregem per sexe, o per gènere. Deixa de ser inclusiu perquè estem fent una segregació en aquest sentit. Podem no fer-ho.”³

¹ My translation: I don’t think they (extracurricular activities) have never had the objective to educate. The objective has always been to allow parents to have their kids controlled.

² My translation: There are sports in which inclusion does not fit in.

³ My translation: When does football stop being inclusive? When we don’t separate children by gender. It stops being inclusive because we are segregating in this sense. We can choose not to do it.

Towards this information, Serraima declares the following: “A les federacions quan tu tens dotze anys, ja no pots jugar amb els nois, no? El Consell de l’Esport Escolar de Barcelona (CEEB) et permet jugar fins als quaranta anys.”⁴

The results confirm that this is a good choice for promoting accessibility to children and highlights the importance of institutions such as CEEB, which takes all the children into account from the very beginning.

Previously mentioned, Roca and Torres started a discussion on the priorities to be taken into account when signing children up in extracurricular activities, focusing on children who are much more likely to have full accessibility to these activities. It is unfortunate that this study did not include all the children and did lose sight of a part of the society. From this, we can realise that it is needed to look at the bigger picture and start changing the accessibility issue from its origin. After that, this can be complemented by studying which methodological approaches are more useful in the extracurricular practice in situ.

From the very beginning, it was known that there was an existing learning gap of 6000 hours between children with more opportunities and the ones that do not, as stated by ExpandEd Schools.

Although most educational institutions had knowledge of this fact, there has always been a prioritization on children in a better situation. This can apply equally to public institutions, who have not contributed to a more equal education, spending the same public funds in unequal backgrounds.

In terms of accessibility, there has been the appearance of several institutions, such as Associació Esportiva Ciutat Vella (AECV) and 7 d’Aventura, which facilitate the extracurricular access to children in more vulnerable areas. These institutions study the accessibility problems of the mentioned areas, and look for solutions to contribute to children’s participation in out-of-school practices. For instance, AECV tries to spread the existence of extracurricular activities in the neighbourhood where this institution takes place and adapts to its diversity, with the objective of making extracurricular activities visible and significant for families and children.

With respect to aim 2: “Analyse the different models and strategies in order to foster social inclusion in extracurricular activities”, it was found that inclusion should start the moment kids

⁴ My translation: When you are twelve years old you are not allowed to play with boys any longer in federations. CEEB (Consell escolar de l’esport de Barcelona) permits you to play until your forties.

do not have access to these activities, yet also the typology and methodological approaches of the activity contribute to it.

A common view amongst the participants was that the accessibility to extracurricular activities was the first step towards inclusion. Both Díaz and Serraima agree that the problem lies in access to these activities, and brought public economy to debate.

Serraima (2020), coordinator for extracurricular activities in *Associació Esportiva Ciutat Vella* (AECV) mentioned that the number of participants in extracurricular practices in vulnerable districts can equally contribute to inequity within children. AECV acts in districts where children come from cultures which are far likelier to do extracurricular activities than kids from other neighborhoods. This contributes to a low number of registration in the activities, which can lead to children being unable to participate in an activity due to a lack of participants. Towards this issue, AECV manages to join the different district schools (8 public schools and 2 private schools), and use specific spaces on them, where kids from several centers get together and participate in extracurricular practices, contributing to an adequate number of children.

7 d'Aventura takes a similar position in other neighbourhoods, where the participation issue takes place in a lower grade.

As indicated earlier, families from these neighbourhoods are not used to out-of-school activities, which is an obstacle for AECV and 7 d'Aventura to have families to sign their children up. In this sense, Serraima proposes: “Cada any al principi de curs passem per les classes, passem a les reunions de pares (...). Parlem que els nens han de fer esport i les tutores també apreten molt a les famílies. Sobretot, el que fem és que, durant 15 dies que es donen les beques extraescolars de l'ajuntament, cada dia estem allà, perquè les famílies vinguin i demanin les beques i no hagin de pagar res”⁵. Also, registration is open during the whole year, in order to facilitate families who have just arrived and want to sign their children up in extracurricular practices.

When it come to grants, Serraima states that a vast majority of the children in the association do not pay for their extracurricular activities or pay only a 10% of the total payment, as they are aided by the city council. Equally, 7 d'Aventura helps the children to pay this lasting 10% by a prorogation on the payments. Jimenez, 7 d'Aventura coordinator indicates: “ les beques que atorga l'Institut Barcelona Esports (IBE), que són les beques de la pràctica esportiva,

⁵ My translation: Every year at the beginning of the school year we go to classrooms, parents meetings (...). We talk about the importance for children to do sports and tutors also push families towards it. Specially, what we do, fifteen days before the grants are given from the city council, we are present, for families to come and ask for their grants and help them not to pay any expense.

poden cobrir fins a un 90 per cent d'un màxim de 250 euros, anuals.”⁶, which adds to the existing debate on public economy derived to education.

A new concept, “Pla de xoc”⁷ was further introduced by Serraima. This plan has been originated to fight social segregation and contribute to educational success. It tries to guarantee children’s integral education beyond the ordinary schedule. In general terms, “Pla de xoc” takes into account all the children in a vulnerability state, who benefit from full grants that allow them to have everything taken care of. Access to school, school supplies, and extracurricular activities and lunch time grants are included in this programme.

Another remarkable feature is the way newcomers are distributed in the different schools during the course. If these students are to start their schooling year once this has already started, they are distributed equitably in the different centers in the neighbourhood, as a way of avoiding all newcomers come to the same institution.

The grant information can be used to develop actions aimed at the public investment in the educational field. In reference to this idea, Educació 360 made a budget increase that put Girona over the Catalan average and was a hopeful starting point for these measures to take place everywhere else.

In the same direction of aim 1, it is important to realise that the first issue lies on the public economy. In this sense, the researched showed a project called “Pressupost 2020, Catalunya 2030”, which wants to contribute to a greater expense on children’s education. The objective is to allocate 600 million euros, turning education into the second most significant issue by the Catalan government, after healthiness. A further study could assess the viability of these applications and the real procedures that could take place in order to facilitate this process.

The third research aim was to “Propose an optimal model to foster inclusion in the extracurricular practice”. Amongst the different answers given by the interviewees and the previous theoretical framework, a list of implementations and suggestions has been presented towards this objective. The mentioned is to be presented through a web page, as this resource adapts to the fully technological society we find ourselves in and also contributes to a better understanding of the different points established.

⁶ My translation: Grants given by IBE, which are the ones destined to the sportive practice, can cover a maximum of ninety percent of 250 annual euros.

⁷ My translation: Crash programme

When it comes to the objectives of the website, it should focus on giving visibility to extracurricular activities amongst educators and institutions. Also, it presents recommendations to be followed in order to contribute to a much more inclusive practice and ultimately, to start promoting extracurricular activities stressing on the educational factor.

As for the website structure, there has been an influence on the campaigns launched by the Catalan Government, as these have a strong and a visual message expressed in a simple and understandable way. It has been divided in four different sections.

There is a main page where there is an introduction to put the readers into context and get in touch with the extracurricular activities' topic and the importance of inclusion. Accessibility issues are also presented in order to raise awareness of it.



Figure 1: Introduction section



Figure 2: Introduction section (II)

Secondly, there is a well-founded explanation of the benefits of out-of-school practice in order to provide factual knowledge for readers. The different outcomes: academic, social, emotional, prevention and wellness are develop in this section.

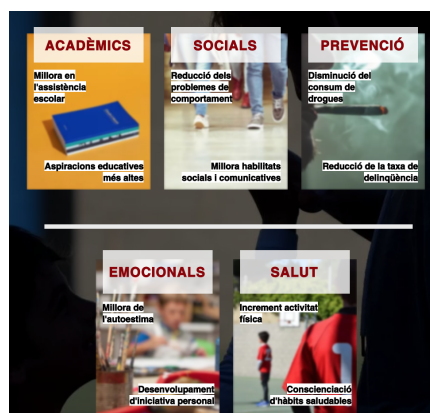


Figure 3: Benefits section

Also, there is a section to express interesting ideas and quotes from experts, who have been interviewed during the elaboration of this paper.

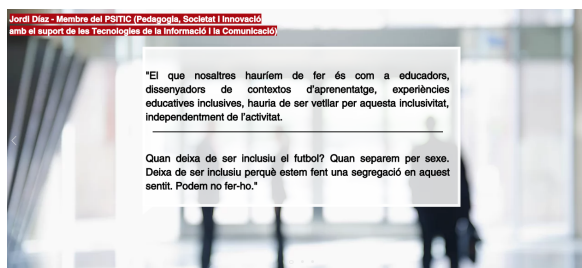


Figure 4: Experts section



Figure 5: Key aspects section

Finally, the key aspects are explained in the last section, which tries to give recommendations and suggestions for both educational institutions and educators in order to foster inclusion in the extracurricular practice. All of the different categories seen in the picture below are developed when clicking on them, providing specific measures.

Conclusions

At this point, the importance of out-of-school activities and the benefits these may have in the cognitive development of children have been well justified. Unfortunately, the access to the mentioned is not equal for everyone, contributing to a gap in society that seems to get larger every day.

Throughout the paper, there has been a discussion on different aspects. With regard to the benefits of extracurricular activities, many authors have displayed the numerous profits these activities can have on children. Inherently, the discussion has been brought towards children with fewer opportunities, who are not able to benefit from the extracurricular practices, which magnifies their difficulties. As there has been the participation of a reduced number of experts, the conclusions are not to be generalised but considered within an specific context.

Furthermore, diverse answers were found on the type of activities that should take place in order to foster inclusion. Although there has not been a complete understanding within the authors, it was found that physical activities could have better gains than cognitive ones. However, new type-like activities were brought to debate, such as technological workshops, what gives a new perspective to be studied further.

On the other side, research has shown an international model towards inclusion that was conducted within extreme difficulties and had great success. The mentioned should give light to action plans taken into account at the moment nationwide.

Regarding these action plans, investigation also revealed implementations taking place in the national area. The focus was set on three different programs, from Educació 360 to Baobab, as well as a schedule changing proposal by Jaume Bofill. It is worth making further investigations on these programs, specially on the latter one, due to the shallow research conducted about it.

During the course of this paper, specific measures were expected to be found in order to be taken into account in the present extracurricular practice. There was a concrete focus on the methodologies used through out-of-school activities towards inclusion, while the stress on accessibility was secondary, which concluded to be the primary issue concerning an inclusive practice.

In this sense, out-of-school activities can not take place if children do not have the same opportunities in terms of participation. Towards this approach, the study encountered broader difficulties, such as government economic measures, which were found to be restricting for this participation to occur. Other aspects, such as an insufficient number of participants, payment difficulties, as well as cultural differences, had to do with the accessibility problematic.

With this found, the paper's objective was to seek for ways of contributing to a major accessibility within children, later focusing on the methodological approaches or measures to focus on when the extracurricular practice takes place. Through the paper, a number of guidelines have been proposed in order to contribute to accessibility and to a more inclusive practice in-situ. In this sense, it is worth to carry out further studies on the actual viability of aspects established, as these are found to make a difference for children.

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