

# An experience of university education to communicate about poverty and inequality

## Una experiencia de formación universitaria para comunicar sobre desigualdad y pobreza

### Uma experiência de formação universitária para comunicar sobre desigualdade e pobreza

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#### ABSTRACT

This article discusses a teaching experience in communication, poverty and inequality implemented in Chile during 2012 and 2013 by teachers and undergraduate and graduate students of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. The aim was to integrate in university education the right to communication and information of people marginalized, in this case minors whose rights have been violated in an area with high rates of poverty. Students conducted various workshops of communication and journalism with fifty children and adolescents who learned to do reporting and to generate local content for different media. The results and the challenges for planning future in other contexts of inequality are discussed in this paper.

**Keywords:** University teaching, communication, poverty, inequality, service-learning.

#### RESUMEN

*Este artículo analiza una experiencia de enseñanza en comunicación, pobreza y desigualdad implementada en Chile durante 2012 y 2013 por profesores y estudiantes de pre y posgrado de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. El objetivo fue integrar en la formación universitaria el derecho a la comunicación e información de quienes viven en la marginalidad; en este caso, menores de una comuna con altos índices de pobreza, cuyos derechos han sido vulnerados. Los estudiantes realizaron talleres de comunicación con niños y adolescentes, que aprendieron a reportear y generar contenidos locales en distintos medios. Se discuten los resultados del caso y los desafíos para futuras formaciones en otros contextos de desigualdad.*

**Palabras clave:** Educación universitaria, comunicación, pobreza, desigualdad, aprendizaje-servicio.

#### RESUMO

Este artigo analisa uma experiência de ensino em comunicação, pobreza e desigualdade implementada no Chile durante 2012 e 2013 por quatro professores e cinquenta estudantes de graduação e pós-graduação da Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. O objetivo foi integrar na formação universitária o direito à comunicação e informação das pessoas que vivem na marginalidade. Os universitários realizaram distintos workshops de comunicação e jornalismo com cinquenta crianças e adolescentes que aprenderam a fazer reportagens e gerar conteúdos locais de rádio, fotografia, televisão e redes sociais. São discutidos os resultados da experiência e os desafios para planejar futuras formações universitárias com objetivos similares em outros contextos de desigualdade.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação facultade, comunicação, pobreza, desigualdade, serviço-aprendizagem.

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication on poverty and inequality particularly that deployed through routines and journalistic practices is of interest to various public organizations, non-governmental and academic organizations. Littin (2006) argues that there is little knowledge of journalists on the problems of people living in poverty; and that in the news prevails widely a superficial treatment of the stories featuring those who live the situation daily. This is relevant, since poverty is primarily a multidimensional phenomenon, of which understanding and approach vary in terms of the actors who define it or address it. In that regard, Spicker, Alvarez and Gordon (2009) consider it is very different to study poverty and inequality and to design public policies in these areas from the academics or experts' criteria, than documenting it, for example, from the direct participation of the individuals trying to overcome it daily. Something similar happens from the perspective of the media coverage. As noted by San Martín (2009), beyond its objective conditions of existence, poverty is also a social and collective construction, in which the media plays a key role, but not exclusive. Thus, adds the author, in contemporary society, "the condition of the poor corresponds to a specific and lower social status, stigmatized, symbol of social failure and leading to moral degradation" (p. 2).

This article proposes that a way to specifically influence the possibility of an adequate communication associated with inequality and poverty issues is to address its complexity from the university education of future professionals. That was the sense of the experience here reviewed, conducted by a group of teachers and undergraduate and graduate students of the School of Communications at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (PUC). The aim was to integrate into their formal education the recognition of the right to communication and information for people living on marginality, and make it through experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), as it will be explained later. The undergraduate and graduate students conducted various workshops of communication and journalism, particularly for children and adolescents whose rights have been violated and are involved in protection programs of the Ministry of Justice. The request was made by the Municipality of La Pintana, territory

located south of Santiago, to the University, through Puentes UC [Bridges UC] program of the UC Center for Public Policies, whose mission is to contribute to national development by linking academic work with major challenges of society. In this case, it was decided to combine the service-learning methodology (Marta & Gonzalez, 2012; Martinez, 2010) with the focus of communication for social change (Muñoz-Navarro & Del Valle, 2011).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Worldwide, including Latin America, numerous studies and theoretical reflections demonstrate, from different conceptual and methodological approaches, various forms of representation of social actors in the news, which can be associated with either the information inequality, or equity. Among them can be counted: i) the study of journalistic routines in a given moment and context (Etchegaray & Matus, 2015; Lecaros & Greene, 2012); ii) research on the type of coverage or news coverage of social actors in the news (Antezana 2010, 2012; Condeza, 2005b; Fernández-Piedemonte, 2001; Maronna & Sánchez, 2004; Van Leeuwen, 2008; Wimmer & Dominick, 1999); iii) knowledge and subject description of channeling themes and framing practices when reporting, such as on wealth and poverty (Kendall, 2011); iv) uniform or varied representation of political information (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2014); v) the perceptions of different publics on their representation in the news (Condeza, Mujica, Valenzuela & Bachman, 2013; Condeza, Bachman & Mujica, 2014; Espinosa, Ochaítz & Gutiérrez, 2014); and vi) the social impact of journalism in the public sphere, their speech and their framing decisions and representation of others in aspects as pluralism or democracy (Antezana, 2010; Gronemeyer & Porath, 2014). Lacey and Longman (1997) point to the public role played by the media in educating the citizens, in the sense that through them people will not only be inform, but acquires skills and values that articulate their knowledge about reality, as well as the understanding of various aspects of the physical and social world. Underpins the above, according to the same authors, the fact that the majority of the population depends, to some extent, on the available information sources beyond their own experience.

On the other hand, as part of the experience here described is necessary to consider that, even according to the National Statistics Institute ([INE], 2011), “Chile is a country with one of the highest rates of inequality in Latin America, which in turn corresponds to one of the most unequal regions in the world” (p. 8). According to the [INE], the stratification of households is expressed in economic, cultural and social dimensions, which is one of the most profound problems affecting human development of Chilean society. Even the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) highlights how the educational and housing policies sets away the different social groups (2009, cited by Treviño, Salazar & Donoso, 2011). As for the segregation of children and adolescents in the field of education, Contreras, Bustos and Sepulveda (2010) showed how inequality between them is driven by selection mechanisms associated with socioeconomic levels of the students’ families. To Puga (2011), stratification of education in Chile operates as a mechanism for reproducing social inequality in the context of rapid economic growth.

Meanwhile, poverty and inequality are interrelated. While human poverty assumes the deprivation of capabilities that allow people to participate in the benefits of development, inequalities implies unequal access to those benefits, thus contributing to social and political instability (Tezanos, Quiñones, Gutierrez & Madrueño, 2013). In the same context, Mayol (2012) states that, in Chile, “the political elite systematically understood to reduce inequality as a matter of helping the poor overcome the poverty line. They never understood that they were different problems. In poverty food is lacking. In Inequality what is lacking is society” (p. 23). To some extent, the communication about poverty -the same that should demonstrate the complexity mentioned above- is restricted to a range between “drama and statistics” (San Martin, 2009). According to her, “contemporary society extends a double and paradoxical vision of their poor: a fearful rejection and at the same time, a concern about a degraded social situation that has become part of the planetary common sense” (p. 2). As Farfán underlines in her article “La Pobreza en pauta” [Poverty in the agenda] (2006), communicating poverty is not just a problem

about material conditions, but social integration, where communication serves to re-learn or un-know the other:

[I]t is not only important to address the quality of the discussion of public affairs, but who and how that exchange is generated, and how it will include the most neglected Chileans. (...) And it is precisely in the process of re-meeting “the other” as one more piece of the plural gear called society, that the media plays an integrating role. (P. 201)

The debate on the treatment of poverty and inequality in the media has also been oriented to imagine “there are possibilities to improve or deepen those positive practices. For example, the omission of archetypal constructions around poverty or the presence of causes and solutions in most news” (Herrera, 2009, p. 33). Other authors (Alianza Comunicación y Pobreza [Alliance Communication and Poverty], 2013) also propose to address communication in this area as “a ‘relational experience’, i.e., where not only access to certain goods and services is to play, but the forms and ways in which society is related to the victims are closely committed” (p. 4). Communicators are precisely molders of these forms and ways of relating (Condeza, 2005a; Condeza & Baeza, 2006; Maronna & Sánchez, 2004). According to Fernandez-Piedemonte (2001, cited by San Martin, 2009, p. 3):

Overall, news stories circulating in society are used to build models to define the world, know the ways to explain ourselves in contemporary culture, nurture subjectivity, narrate own experiences, learn from human actions that define the public space and the generalized values to judge what is good or bad in our environment.

#### COMMUNICATING ABOUT CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE LIVING IN POVERTY OR INEQUALITY

While the representations are a way of knowing and approaching social reality to try to understand it, in the case of childhood and adolescence “the image collected and amplified by the media helps shape public opinion on the collective. Society is related to it, from the representation made by the media” (Casado del Rio Jimenez & Moreno, 2013, p. 53). According to the psychology of human development (Papalia, Duskin & Martorell, 2012), childhood consists of children from conception to the age of adolescence (twelve to

thirteen years). Although age and stages of development (emotional, cognitive and social) are a universal way to define childhood and adolescence, authors like Turmel (2013) understood it more as a cultural and social construction, which varies in time and according to the sociocultural context. The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) defines child poverty as one in which children and adolescents "experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full members and in equal manner in the society" (Spicker et al., 2009, p. 228). Social inequality in Chile "especially affects children and adolescents, who tend to be proportionally more on low-income households" (UNICEF, 2005, p. 4).

University education of journalists in this area has generally rested on subjects related to professional ethics, framed in the regulatory and legislative aspects, and codes of ethics of each country (National Television Council CNTV, 2013). In the same aspect, UNICEF itself has taken charge of systematizing criteria and guidelines of general actions to sensitize and guide practitioners of communication and information in these cases, either by providing them with specific material about treatment and coverage of childhood and adolescence or conducting training workshops. As for the studies, these have mainly focused on monitoring the content circulating through the media. Well known in the same direction is the work of news agencies specialized in childhood, such as the Latin American Network of News Agencies for Children's Rights (ANDI Latin America), based in Brazil. This network includes NGOs such as news agencies on childhood in Latin America (ANDI, 2012). In these cases, it is customary to analyze the news discourse, the news agenda and media on childhood, to train journalists through specialized seminars on childhood law (Maurás, 2013). Most of the research that has addressed the issue of minors and the media, however, is more focused on adolescence than in childhood (Casado del Río et al, 2013; Jensen, 2007). Other researches have measured, interpreted and compared between countries the news coverage, as well as the variety of topics on which children are present in the daily news agenda (Maronna & Sánchez,

2004; Condeza, 2005b; Briceño, 2007; Haddon & Stald, 2008; Casado del Río et al, 2013). In addition, in various researches the impact of the coverage of information on minors (Wright, Kunkel, Pinon & Huston, 1989) or in the construction of gender (Huston, 1988) is examined.

Childhood in the news and its forms of representation by journalists are also a source of social controversy. Citizenship itself becomes part, sometimes, to demonstrate against the informative or medial treatment given to boys and girls, or their families, when involved in an event or affected by it. Criticism of the lack of respect for professional ethics, or to the rights of minors and their families in news coverage have been collected in Chile by studies such as one made by the National Council on Television about the coverage of the north earthquake and fire of Valparaíso (CNTV, 2014). Also, for years they have been subject to ruling by the Consejo de Ética de los Medios de Comunicación de Chile [Board of Ethics of the Chilean Media] (2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2005 and 2007). Meanwhile, Wardle (2007) argues that, in general, the news coverage of boys and girls has become mostly visual and that images reported have become custom.

In this context, arises the question whether the informative speech on childhood is the sole responsibility of the journalistic profession or also, if other information flows from social actors interested in being on the daily news agenda, circulate, operate and influence in the production of news (Manning, 2001). Tablante (2009) states that "poverty is an episodic issue, which journalistic treatment depends mainly on the occurrence of a disaster, natural or social" (p. 88). Verdugo (2003) argues that television contributes to stigmatize young people from popular areas, by referring to them when they star on events or violent criminal acts, or are victims of drugs, lack of opportunity or violence. For this reason, she notes, television influences in strengthening the mechanisms of social exclusion in Chile. In the same context, Condeza (2005a) shows how this is a cross-media practice, because when teenagers in popular sectors are represented as actors and not as recipients of the action, they usually appear acting negatively. Valenzuela, in his article "Identidades juveniles" [Youth Identity] (1998,

pp. 44-45, quoted by Gómez, 2013, p. 56) considers the ways of identifying youth of popular culture are “rejected by the dominant sectors, where the members of outlawed groups or symbolic networks are objects of pejorative characterizations and often persecutory”.

#### IDENTITY OF THE EXPERIENCE

In January 2012, the Center for Public Policies at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, through its Puentes UC<sup>1</sup> [Bridges UC] program, which is linked to society from various agreements with municipalities, received a petition from the Municipality of La Pintana<sup>2</sup> to develop communication and media workshops for a group of fifty children and adolescents living in poverty and inequality in the areas of San Ricardo and Lo Castillo of this commune, located in a suburb south of Santiago. These young people belonged to a Community Prevention Program (PPC), funded by the National Minors Service (SENAME) and the Ministry of Justice.

According to the last census (2012), the commune is inhabited by 182,930 people, of which 25.03% are 15 years old or younger. The population there that lives in poverty (17.2%) is above the national average (13.7%). The same applies to the illiteracy rate (5.2%, 3.9% in Chile). The average years of schooling are also lower (8.8) than the national average (10.1). The commune has a higher percentage of unemployed people (11%) than the rest of the country (7.3%). If the average household income in Chile is \$ 620,475 (Chilean pesos) in La Pintana it is almost 35% less (\$ 403,495). Regarding the situation of childhood and adolescence, according to the Index of Childhood and Adolescence of 2009, by the Ministry of Planning (MIDEPLAN, 2009), in 2006 the global index of the rights to education, health, income and livability, which is measured in a range of 0 to 1, was 0.56. This means that of the 332 Chilean municipalities, La Pintana is ranked at 190, with an average achievement of compliance with the rights of children and adolescents, according to the index.

The Rights Protection Offices [OPD], created in Chile in 2001, operate in communication with Community Prevention Programs (PPC, created in 2008 at the commune level), funded by the National Minors Service, and seek to strengthen local protection systems of children's rights (SENAME, 2011). The latter

programs are located in areas of high social exclusion and are usually run by non-governmental organizations and civil society. They seek to promote the rights of children and adolescents, and to prevent its violation, particularly in contexts of poverty and inequality. Both, the Protection of Rights Office, and the Community Prevention Program of La Pintana were interested in promoting the communication rights of boys, girls and adolescents treated at various existing workshops (circus and theater) by monitors. This need is based on the own Children and Youth Diagnostic of the commune, made in 2008 by the Rights Protection Office (OPD), which established that younger people, especially the most vulnerable, regret been unable to occupy public spaces due to drug traffic and alcohol use in those places, and have low levels of achievement in primary and secondary education, resulting in hopelessness and early dropout. Along with this, children and adolescents surveyed in the diagnosis recognize their right to education, health, give opinions and proper treatment. The same Rights Protection Office in that community had set themselves, for the 2011-2014 period, to “empower / participants with communication tools as well as providing a platform for promotion and dissemination of their rights in such workshops” (OPD La Pintana, 2011, p. 80).

#### WORK METHODOLOGY AND REALIZATION OF WORKSHOPS

While the request for the workshops came from the Protection of Rights of Children's Office in the commune, it meant a concrete opportunity of professional training for the university's communications students in connection with the communication rights of minors, in an area of exclusion and priority intervention. This is important to emphasize, because sometimes formative experiences of this type are often confused with social volunteering, when what is about, is precisely to put the University in relation to the environment, in a context of training professionals to serve the country. In the words of Bergomás (2009, p 65, cited by Gómez, 2013, p 70), “the University must also begin to question its place as an institution producer of knowledge: What kind of knowledge and which policies of knowledge are we sustaining with our practices?”



Aguaded and Contreras (2011) argue that college radios are “a good way to seek the develop of a greater sensitivity in society towards people and groups that are usually excluded from the media field and, if included, is always with a strong pejorative character, full of prejudices and as generators of only the news in the events section” (p. 7). In that sense, the work methodology adopted to implement four communications workshops, led by four teachers and fifty undergraduate and graduate students of the School of Communications combined three approaches: i) service-learning, ii) experiential learning and iii) communication for social change. That way it was sought to sensitize students to re-introduce the children and adolescents from their own reality (Farfán, 2006) and right to communicate (Condeza, 2005a), in this case of the people who live in poverty and inequality, on which one day they will have to report.

Service-learning develops professional and curricular competences of college students through a community service and is related to civic and social dimension of academic learning (Marta & Gonzalez, 2012; Martinez, 2010). In the field of training media professionals, service-learning allows students to be aware of the importance of journalism as a public service (Marta & Gonzalez, 2012). This involves creating training situations “that imply community involvement and enable the improvement of living conditions in the territory” (Martinez, 2010, p. 7). In the words of the same author, the proposals of service-learning are designed to provide more social meaning to academic learning and training college students in social responsibility. The learning methodology of the reporters’ workshop envisaged training communications professionals from a critical perspective and ethics, and a reflection on their work from the same perspective. Under this approach, when working with children in relation to their communication rights, the university’s students not only teach communications techniques of radio, photography, audiovisual, digital or other. Also, they understand the way journalists give visibility to childhood in the media, and how they conceive and represent situations that occur in the most vulnerable sectors. And along with it, they become aware that often, reporting police actions, violence, drug trafficking or abusive situations, will be up to them.

The workshops are designed to teach children how to be a reporter as a resource to practice their communication rights, understanding them as people subjects of law. In turn, it was sought for students of the Faculty to become aware of the impact of journalistic practices in society, for which they will be responsible. As Bergmann-Harris said, quoted by Sánchez (2007, p. 6), “journalists, as opinion formers, are vital. They have the responsibility to present and legitimize the views of the various social sectors and installing topics on the agenda and generate public debate.” Moreover, Bevort, Frémont and Joffredo (2012) suggest making media education programs with adolescents, to empower them as communicators and help them develop skills of critical distance and analysis of messages and ways of representing them.

Meanwhile, experiential learning supposes that direct experience plays a central role in learning and people’s development, while cognitive behavioral or educational approaches emphasize the acquisition, handling and recollection over the subjective experience (Kolb, 1984). The author suggests a systemic approach to learning through direct experience, allowing decisions, conscious action and informed judgment of people in new situations from observation, participation and reflection experienced in a learning situation.

As for the principles of communication for social change, Muñoz-Navarro and Del Valle (2011) criticize how most universities that are forming communicators in the undergraduate and graduate programs have not integrated this approach in the training of their students and propose this type of experience, in which it is considered that the affected communities have a better understanding of their ‘reality’ than the outside experts. For Bessette (2004), this type of approach practices horizontal and participatory communication among participants. In this regard, he states that any intervention methodology in communication intended to be participatory must take the following steps: i) establish a relationship with the local community and understand the stage of the intervention; ii) involve the community in identifying a problem, possible solutions, and lead concrete actions; iii) identify and involve different groups and decision makers related to the problem, identified goal or initiative; iv) identify

communication needs, objectives and activities; v) identify resources or appropriate media; vi) prepare and test previously all content and communication materials; vii) facilitate cooperation between players; viii) to produce and implement a plan; ix) monitoring and evaluation of the communication strategy, documentation of the research process; and x) plan and share the use of the results. Bessette added that the resources of communication and the media have to aim, in this perspective, to facilitate interpersonal communication, enabling communication between groups, facilitate the use of traditional media by ease of access to them, as well as technologies of information and communication.

The experience's spirit of the workshops of communication and media pursued that, when presenting the role of reporters for their communities, young people would develop communication and media production skills, "convinced of the communicative potential of every individual and that the media is a tool that should be at their service, because the media are a pretext to support processes of exchange and interaction with others" (Condeza, 2005a). Additionally, it was about making young people feel leaders of their own community and practice strategies for peaceful and constructive communication. In respect to the foregoing, Uranga (2007) states.

By communicating a frame of meaning is built that involves all stakeholders, individuals and collectives, in a construction process also collective that generates common reading keys, senses that make up ways to understand and be understood, interpretive modes in the framework of a society and a culture. (P. 4).

In the same vein -and following Bessette (2004)- although the first three steps of the method of communication intervention were predefined by local actors, four workshops were designed in which four teachers from different subjects and university students<sup>3</sup> taught boys, girls and adolescents participating, to be radio and graphics reporters, and to prepare spots on their rights for the experimental television station of the Municipality. The fourth workshop of social networks was implemented for the monitors of the groups of the Community Prevention Program. As background, a workshop for radio

journalists was implemented with ten adolescents from La Pintana and two thesis students from the Masters in Communication and Education, led by two teachers<sup>4</sup> (May-September 2012). The evaluation of this experience coincided with the call to Ciudadanía Activa [Active Citizenship] contest by Talloires Network, Participa [Participation] Foundation and Walmart Foundation, an international fund for service-learning where the amplification of the project was presented. The workshops were held because of those resources.

All workshops were based on the principle that to communicate and report initially is necessary to read and write the news in different media (Bevort, 1996). In the case of the radio workshop, the same author states that "radio is a medium that presents enormous educational opportunities, especially in areas of remedial education or priority action, where students have significant learning difficulties, focusing exclusively on traditional schemes, based especially on the written code" (p. 91). They also learned how to make informative scripts for radio.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

The photojournalists workshop (conducted the second half of 2012<sup>5</sup>) was organized from a first reconsideration among college students and young participants from the circus workshop, after which there was a first training meeting in which Journalism students taught the fifty boys, girls and adolescents the basic concepts of photojournalism. The task assigned to them was precisely to capture news of the neighborhood through the lens. They had a week to do this and cameras purchased through the project funding, which were subsequently given to the Rights Protection Office. The young reporters arrived with about five hundred photos that, generally, managed to apply the concepts learned to portray their daily environment, such as school, office, neighborhood, business, friends, Sopaipillas [fry bread] or fruit stalls. For professor Saavedra, in charge of the workshop, these informative pieces were produced "with its own view that is far away from the stereotypical image that stigmatizes people living in poverty residing in La Pintana". College

students, meanwhile, held their own record of the experiences, and at the time of publication of this article the mounting of a photographic exhibition is pending, at the Municipality and the University, where this work of mutual and crossed looks (of students to the context and the lives of the young participants of the circus workshop, and the adolescents to their news in pictures) will be presented, as well as editing a documentary about the experience.

#### TELEVISION WORKSHOP

As Bevort (1995) states, learning and educating in reading an image is a crosscutting issue, so the initial idea requested by the Rights Protection Office, of La Pintana, consisting of adolescents served by Community Prevention Programs creating campaign spots for the local television station<sup>6</sup>, was implemented with a group of seventeen adolescents from the theater group Young World [Mundo Joven] and students of Masters in Social Communication, mention of Communication and Education, of PUC<sup>7</sup>. Teens made the scripts, creation and performance of nine spots about rights, from real experiences of violations occurred in their neighborhood, which subjects were requested by the OPD: i) Expression and freedom of access to information; ii) The right to a safe and healthy life; iii) The right to protection against abuses; iv) Against child labor; v) No discrimination; vi) Preferential treatment in a situation of deprivation of liberty; vii) The right to education; viii) The right to identity; ix) The right to family. They worked with them for the various issues of the rights commissioned, to decide, collectively and participative, the contents of the scripts. The master's students were responsible of writing the final content of the scripts, being this, one of the final works of their subject. This was the result of a coming and going of ideas, among those shared by the adolescents, according to their own experiences of violated and dreamed rights, and the master students' writing, professionals from different disciplines.

Below we show an example of the nine screenplays produced during this process, in this case based on the illegal car races that some of the teens attend. The script also includes reflections on the decision on its content, discussed by the master students<sup>8</sup>.

### "THE RIGHT TO FREE EXPRESSION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION"

#### CONSIDERED ARTICLES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD<sup>9</sup>

- **Article 12:** Children have the right to express their opinions freely and that the opinion is duly taken into account in all matters affecting them.
- **Article 13:** Children have the right to express their views, obtain information and impart information and ideas of all kind.

#### CHARACTERS AND ROLES

- **Daniel:** 16 years old. He lives with his mom. He likes car races.
- **Daniel's Mother:** She lives with her children. She is about 40 years old. She works. On weekends she likes to meet with her family.
- **Daniel's Grandma:** She lives alone. She has an only daughter, Daniel's mother. Weekends she usually receives a visit from her daughter and grandchildren.

#### LOCATIONS

##### Day - Afternoon

1. **Daniel's Bedroom:** A bed, with a cover and cushions with cars motive, and furniture as a closet and a desk. Decoration intended only to car races (posters, bed cover, ornaments about cars).
2. **Daniel's house livingroom:** Armchairs, TV, coffee table and a cabinet with pictures of Daniel, his mother and grandmother.
3. **Grandma's house, livingroom:** A typical grandmother livingroom with pottery figures, knitted tablecloths, phone, glasses, knitting and an armchair. In the background the phone rings and rings and no one answers.
4. **A place for car races:** Many people with cameras, posters encouraging their favorites, with shouts and applauses. In the background are noises of car engines.

#### STORY

*(It's Saturday afternoon. Daniel is in his room, sitting on the bed and leaning against the wall; he is entertained*



with his cell phone checking Facebook. On the wall there are many posters of cars, motors and races. Over the night table, a photograph of Daniel's grandmother, the typical "sweet old lady" signed with the words "with love for my grandson Daniel." Daniel gets excited when his Facebook shows that this afternoon will be a car race. He starts to pick up his things to go, when from outside the room the voice of Daniel's mother is heard.)

**Mother.** —Are you ready?

**Daniel** (winning). —I won't go to grandma's. Today.

(Daniel's mother enters the bedroom, angry).

**Mother** —How come you won't go? You know that Saturday's afternoon we go to see my mom. And if I'm going you are going too.

**Daniel.** —I don't want to go today, I'll go to the races with my friends. You know how much I love car races.

**Mother** (dramatically). —Of course, the races! Surely that is more important than to visit your grandmother who is alone... it is the only time that she can enjoy her family...

**Daniel** (exasperated). —It's just this once! I go every weekend, but today I want to go with my friends.

**Mother** (dramatically). —I can see that you don't care about your family... and your grandmother who loves you so much!

**Daniel** (angry). —Yes I care! The one that doesn't care about what I think is you... and I'm sure Grandma wouldn't do this show!

(Daniel leaves the bedroom, slamming the door).

(It's sunset, Daniel's mother is in the living room of her home, worried. Daniel hasn't come back yet, so she decides to call her mother, to warn her that they won't go to her home this afternoon. In Grandma's livingroom, the phone rings and rings and nobody answer).

(The cars race at high speed, the audience cheers the runners, shouts and applause are heard, and in the public we see Daniel, who celebrates and hugs his grandmother, who is also celebrating, she is happy to be at the car races. The grandmother wears a leather jacket and jumps hugging Daniel).

**Grandma** (laughing). —This is very fun! Can we come next Saturday with your Mom?

(The screen goes black and the voice of the grandmother is heard).

**Grandma.** —Children and adolescents have the right to access information and to have their views heard.

(Then Daniel's voice says what's written on the screen).

**Daniel.** —Respect the rights of children and youth is a task of all of us, starting with you.

#### OBSERVATIONS

In this section the students refer to the point of view of the members of the theater group which they worked with:

- Pablo was interested in the role of Daniel; In fact, Pablo likes car races and is a boy who studies and works.
- Is it relevant to show an illegal car race in this context? Otherwise, it could be switched to another type of sporting activity that is conducted regularly in La Pintana (e. g. Football). Remember that Daniel "is crazy" with that activity, so his bedroom must be decorated with items that remind him of his passion.
- The language used in conversation between Daniel and his mother can be modified depending on the audience wished to reach and according to the context in which it is performed. The important thing is to keep the tone, rhythm and purpose of it.

#### RADIO WORKSHOP

With the same funding obtained through the participation in the Ciudadanía Activa [Active Citizenship] contest, the basic equipment needed to form an online community radio was purchased, the same that were then donated to the Municipality. The aim was that, through that resource, teenagers from La Pintana, this time those belonging to the break dance group with the monitors from the NGO Acuarela [Watercolor]<sup>10</sup> in charge of implementing the Program for Rights Protection (OPD), could produce programs that match their interests. To this end, they received training from volunteers students' from Radio UC<sup>11</sup>, led by professor and head of the station, Carlos Montenegro. To synthesize the learning that this experience conducted during the first half of 2013 meant to them, from which the adolescents participating prepared a program about their rights, this academic prefers to quote Contreras (2012), which allows him to explain, how in his opinion, thanks to the project of La Pintana, journalism students were able to experience that the college radio is a channel of expression for new voices:

New, because they usually aren't part of the usual discourse of the mainstream media. From young people with concerns and different perspectives, teachers and specialists or even local communities, they all find here a unique place of interaction with the rest of the citizenry. (...) Therefore, by the universities it also involves an approach and outreach to society. (Contreras, 2012, p. 154)

The coordinator of students and the project with Radio UC and La Pintana, then voluntary student of Radio UC, today journalist Constanza Rodríguez, considers that this training marked her as a professional, not only for its novelty from the academic perspective, but because it allowed her “to see the medial reality to which we are accustomed in the eyes of the young people we work with.” In the same vein she adds:

The service-learning process had very different stages. The first was with them in their space, in their place, which they considered very own and an essential part of his life and they let us enter that world. The second was in the school and in the halls of the University radio. I remember perfectly how much it got their attention editing, how it worked, how was the studio, and that they arrived with their homework done and the dedication was noticeable. They put a lot of effort and had a good time in the studio and doing the activities of the workshops. That experience shocked us all, but I believed that specifically for them it went beyond the radio workshop or beyond showing them how Radio UC really works, because they worked with people they didn't know and they had to learn to trust what we were proposing to them. They also saw a reality of work and study that was close to them and were enthusiastic about the subject. (Personal communication in writing, October 2015)

### CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS IN FUTURE EXPERIENCES

The evaluation of the experience by undergraduate and graduate participants was generally positive. As is depicted by one of the senior journalism students who joined the photography workshop, Maria Jesus Collado, “there is a reason why you study journalism, because of all the social aspect to come and give such a basic tool for us, but for them it may be a way to publicize their life, their family, and their projects forward.” From the perspective of the clients, in this case the OPD and different monitors from Community Prevention Program, it was appreciated, as Jimmy Fernandez states, monitor for NGO Acuarela [Watercolor], the fact that the different workshops not only sought the learning and approach on how to handle the media by direct experience to youth, but different forms of socialization, an alternative to which they have been accustomed.

The feedback between the college students, on the one hand, and children and adolescents, on the other, allowed mutual understanding and recognition of different realities. As stated by one of the representatives of the Protection of Rights Office when interviewed about the experience for the newspaper of the University, “(for future professionals) probably will allow them to understand the reality of children living in the area of San Ricardo and become part perhaps of some vocational process. We don't always expect journalists to show the realities of all Chileans.”

Regarding the challenges that this type of experience demands, is the fact that both the project and planning may vary down the road, which requires flexibility from its participants. The diversity of actors involved and the levels at which they act and the different responsibilities or purposes that coexist in the same experience, also affect the stability and complexity of the project. In this case were SENAME, the Rights Protection Office, the Community Prevention Program, adolescents, monitors, students and professors of the University, regional managers from the University's Center for Public Policies, and so on. The matter was resolved by hiring one of the master's thesis students as project coordinator for his expertise in vulnerable areas and communications.

Another factor that may affect the implementation and projection in time is the political contingency (e.g. municipal elections, cessation of activities of the project facilitators). From the academic perspective, another challenge is to achieve the inclusion of this type of vocational training in the curriculum. An additional result of the project is the autonomy that was reached after the intervention, because the different local actors participating have continued to develop activities using media in which children and young people of La Pintana are the protagonists. In that sense, Radio Acuarela [Watercolor] has become an active center of practical and concrete content creation by and for adolescents.

The challenge for the University is how to multiply these experiences at university level, so that involves a greater commitment in the line of service-learning, especially in the training of journalists.

## FOOTNOTES

1. "Puentes UC [Bridges UC] is a program of the UC Center for Public Policies that allows students to implement projects that contribute in a concrete and useful way to solving real public problems. Projects are developed as part of the academic training of students, enabling them to develop proposals and implement interventions for the benefit of various public organizations." In <http://puentesuc.cl/>
2. In Chile, municipalities have Rights Protection Offices (OPD) in which professionals from various disciplines are in charge of monitoring their protection and to take action in cases of infringement. One of the OPD professionals, a social worker, had read on a previous experience developed by the UC's School of Communications in southern Chile in 2001 (for details see article Condeza, 2005a).
3. Photography Workshop (teacher Consuelo Saavedra, undergraduate students); Radio Workshop (teacher Carlos Montenegro and Radio UC's volunteers students); TV Workshop (teacher Rayén Condeza and master students in Communication and Education, and Social Network Workshop (teacher Myrna Galvez and master's students).
4. Masters students are Patricia Cocq and Felipe Gómez (currently working at the National Institute of Human Rights, Chile) and their Master teachers' are Myrna Galvez and Rayén Condeza. Young people were introduced weekly to the radio based on the sample of similar experiences in different contexts. They learned to make informative scripts and were motivated to map the population from two objectives: i) identify their topics of interest and develop their own agenda of reporting; and ii) reflect on their rights in relation to these issues. With regard to media education, adolescents participated in a visit to a nationwide commercial radio (Radio Cooperativa) and a television channel (Megavisión).
5. Professor Consuelo Saavedra and Communication's undergraduate students from recent years of the Journalistic Photography Workshop.
6. See in <https://www.youtube.com/user/Canal39TVLocal>
7. Teacher Rayén Condeza and the students of the master's class Children, Adolescents and Media were in charge of this workshop. It was developed in the second half of 2012.
8. In this case, the script authors were Karina Alvarado (teacher), Daniela Díaz (historian) and Karen Banchón (journalist, foreign student from Ecuador).
9. See UNICEF, Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted on 20 November 1989 by the United Nations and ratified by Chile in 1990, <http://unicef.cl/web/convencion/>
10. Since then Acuarela Radio [Watercolor] works with this equipment - "Human rights in full color." The mission of the radio says, it is to broadcast programs aimed at developing a culture based on human rights and the dissemination of Chilean music. Acuarela Radio [Watercolor] gives proper space to free expression of boys, girls and youth in the municipality of La Pintana. See <http://www.myradiostream.com/radioacuarela>.
11. Radio UC, *Ideas que suenan bien [Ideas that sound good]*, <http://www.radiouc.cl/>

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