FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE A NEW VIEW OF LIFE.

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ABSTRACT

Intergenerational projects seek to find ways to improve relationships within society. As a result of the economic, social and political situation that we are living through, the welfare state is struggling to ensure that the most disadvantaged groups receive the support they need. With intergenerational projects, we seek to connect two groups of people with the intention of promoting healthy relations between them, looking for positive results and underlining the importance of belonging.

Vulnerability, exclusion, solidarity, intergenerational, society

SNAPSHOT OF MODERN SOCIETY

Due to the changes that are taking place in society at an economic, cultural and social level the welfare state is beginning to lose coherence. This situation makes disadvantaged groups more likely to suffer from a lack of support.

The differences between the past and today’s societies are remarkable. The number of elderly people has increased notably (in 2050 there will be about 2 billion seniors\(^1\)), and at the same time the number of children in situation of defencelessness. Human longevity is an unprecedented phenomenon which we’ve never faced before and is becoming a problem.

Gradually, our aging population is being treated by public policy. In fact in 2002 the United Nations launched its action plan on ageing, Towards a Society for All Ages. The aim of this project is to take into account all the abilities which elderly people have to be active members of society.

On the one hand this project is a step forward in the well-being of older people but on the other hand, we do not yet see the effects of this big push in daily life. Elderly people suffer in a difficult situation. This is a mix between a worsening quality of

life and loneliness. Loneliness is a great problem, and one which increases still further for those who are in vulnerable situations.

Due to the economic crisis that we live in, the lack of security is also remarkable for younger people who form another significant vulnerable group. This is a consequence of their political, physical, legal and economic dependence on others (Ararteko, 2013). From the moment of their birth, minors need adults as protectors and security providers, to satisfy their needs and to be able to develop properly (Ibarzola, 2012).

Historically their parents have been the welfare providers but due to globalisation and changes in both family structures and their mechanisms of well-being the role of the family as the only security provider is changing (Minuchin, 1979).

A STEP TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Considering the problems faced by many in society, promoting solidarity is essential. It is important to combat loneliness and at the same time could help to provide security for children who are suffering a high degree of vulnerability.

There are many other cases where intergenerational solidarity can help to tackle problems of loneliness.

In view of this fact, we need societies which resolve to address their problems and unite different generations around projects which recognise their common requirements and interests.

Intergenerational projects connect different generations to improve their capacity and solve problems by helping each other. These projects can contribute to improving society, helping older generations take part in social activity, breaking down the barriers of loneliness and at the same time contributing to building an equitable society.

It is also useful to recognise the variety of intergenerational projects which exist. Depending on the degree of contact between the different generations, the projects will be developed with differing intensity (Kaplan, 2004). In Spain there are different intergenerational projects which can be classified as being of medium intensity since in the majority of them the contact between the different generations are carefully regulated. Therefore
we see the need to promote projects of greater intensity and continuity with the aim of being able to solve the main problems that exist today amongst vulnerable groups.

CONCLUSIONS

We live in a changing society in which uncertainty is part of daily life. The social distance between different generations is increasing. Culture, customs and life opportunities are changing but not always for the better. Younger generations are more and more uninformed of the experiences of older generations. They do not realise the important ways in which other groups can offer them both help and the benefit of their greater experience. And at the same time too many elderly people are suffering real loneliness. Promoting intergenerational projects is the key to building a more just society; helping older generations take an active part in society, ending problems of loneliness and the same time contributing to an equitable society for the younger generations.

REFERENCES:


