

Construcción de capacidades y participación política de la infancia y la juventud en el municipio. El caso de la Comunitat Valenciana

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Resumen

Tradicionalmente, el ejercicio democrático ha sido restrictivo respecto a la participación de ciertos sectores de la ciudadanía que, en muchos casos, coincidía con ser segmentos sociales vulnerables. En la actualidad, se están pergeñando nuevas formas de subjetividad política que ubican a niños, niñas y adolescentes como nuevos sujetos políticos. De esta manera, la niñez y adolescencia han logrado relevancia en los ámbitos político, jurídico y social.

La Convención sobre los Derechos de los Niños, aprobada por la ONU en 1989, marcó un punto de inflexión de la infancia como sujeto dotado de derechos políticos. En este sentido, se plantea un cambio de paradigma que considera la participación infantojuvenil no solo como un asunto de los derechos del niño y de la niña sino como una forma de empoderar a los menores, fortalecer los servicios locales y motivar a los representantes políticos y directivos públicos en este compromiso.

Las experiencias participativas infantiles y juveniles son oportunidades de intervenir en los procesos de toma de decisiones sobre los aspectos que interesan a niños y niñas. El fundamento epistemológico que subyace es que los niños, niñas y adolescentes son actores sociales competentes dotados de agencia (Hart, 1997; Lansdown, 2005; Gaitán, 2006; Lundy, 2007). La educación y el aprendizaje para la democracia tienen lugar en una amplia variedad de contextos y tradicionalmente se socializa a los niños para convertirse en ciudadanos responsables pero muchas veces este aprendizaje es poco empírico.

Los aprendizajes cívicos son fundamentales porque en nuestro mundo globalizado estamos expuestos constantemente a tendencias antidemocráticas o a diversos fundamentalismos. Por ello, resulta esencial explorar los límites de la democracia representativa para enriquecerla con prácticas de democracia directa, lo que sin duda favorece la generación de oportunidades de aprendizaje democrático en los niños, niñas y adolescentes.

El presente trabajo analiza las respuestas de 15 entidades locales de la Comunitat Valenciana sobre la celebración de presupuestos participativos infantiles y juveniles en el período 2015-2022. Los datos se han recogido mediante una encuesta y han sido tratados a través del programa MAXQDA. Entre los principales resultados, se puede destacar las distintas percepciones que tienen los participantes del concepto y la necesidad de ahondar en instrumentos de esta naturaleza.

Palabras clave: Participación, infancia, juventud, municipios, cultura democrática.

Abstract

Traditionally, the exercise of democracy has been restrictive for the participation of some sectors of the citizenry, which are often vulnerable social segments. Currently, new political subjectivities are being outlined that place children and adolescents as new political subjects. In this way, childhood and adolescence have acquired great relevance in the political, legal and social spheres.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, approved by the UN in 1989, marked a turning point for childhood as a subject endowed with political rights. For this reason, a paradigm shift has been proposed that focuses on child and adolescent participation both as a matter of rights and as a way to empower children, improve the effectiveness of local services and motivate public managers in this commitment. This work offers the results obtained in an empirical investigation in different municipalities of the Valencian Community, which convened participatory experiences for children, specifically participatory budgets. Children's participatory experiences are opportunities to intervene in decision-making processes on aspects that interest boys and girls.

The underlying epistemological foundation is that children and adolescents are competent social actors endowed with agency (Hart, 1997; Lansdown, 2005; Gaitán, 2006; Lundy, 2007).

Education and learning for democracy take place in a wide variety of contexts, and children are traditionally socialized to become responsible citizens. However, experience shows that this learning is not very empirical.

Civic learning is fundamental because in our globalized world we are constantly exposed to anti-democratic tendencies or fundamentalisms. For this reason, it is important to explore the limits of representative democracy in order to enrich it with practices of direct democracy and favor democratic learning opportunities for children. The present work analyzes the answers of 15 local entities of the Valencian Community about the celebration of children's participatory budgets in the period 2015-2022. The data has been collected through a survey and has been processed through the MAXQDA program. Among the main results, it is possible to highlight the different perceptions that the participants have of the concept and the need to delve into instruments of this nature.

Key words: Participation, childhood, youth, municipalities, democratic culture.

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