

PROFILE IN OCCUPATIONAL COUNSELLING AND PLACEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES: SOCIAL POLICIES AXIS

Matilde Roncoroni

Abstract

This paper presents the gestation of a new model of Occupational Counselling, centred in the joint action of State, Third Sector and Private Organizations. Different programmes are identified which involve the treatment of issues related to Labour, Employment and Education within the framework of objectives of social development, community participation and respect for diversity.

The data of the investigation make it possible to establish connections between the tasks, professional profiles and professional training of the counsellors who participate in the different programmes.

Key Words: Occupational counselling; socio-communal programmes; third sector; social development

Introduction

The data of the investigation “Profile in Career Guidance Counselling and Guidance and Employment Services” give details regarding initiatives developed by community institutions of social participation and non-governmental organizations, which – in the category of intermediate associations or Third Sector – give shape to the socio-communal dimension of Counselling.

Specifically related to Occupational Counselling, these initiatives refer to activities that aim at levelling the possibilities of access to education, qualifications, work training and occupational insertion of popular, culturally marginalized groups.

The proposals pursue a clear objective of Social Development and are usually integrated into plans of Social Politics, with features and decisions related to Political Management.

They also respond to a renewed perspective, broad and extended, of Career Guidance Counselling that is not restricted to the choice. It refers to Ongoing Counselling processes, which accompany the stages of evolutionary development and the moments of transition that the personal, professional, social and working lives of people go through. It also includes the instances of preparation, education and training that are necessary to face new stages, projects, changes and new roles.

The Social Dimension of Career Guidance Counselling is therefore inscribed in the movements of Ongoing Counselling, Education for Career Development and Preparation for change and transformation.

In relation to this, new contexts and models of insertion and institutionalisation of Occupational Counselling are identified, with different organizational structures and with a broad and diverse range of professional qualifications, tasks, and functions.

Social Programmes and Occupational Counselling

The new socio-communal dimension of Counselling is based on the gestation of a new scheme of relationships between the State, the Civil Society (Third Sector) and the Private Sector. These relationships tend to restore the breakdown processes related to:

- The trust placed on the intermediate organizations and on the 'social capital': the value of social ties; the collective identities and the feelings of social participation.
- The commitment and detachment of governmental institutions concerning people's needs, especially in relation to the problems of employment/unemployment and the development of opportunities to have access to the job market.
- The disappearance of the Welfare State and the construction of new spaces and new roles to face the socio-occupational problems.
- The technological frontier, the challenge of the Society of Knowledge, the uneven distribution of knowledge and training.
- The discontent and lack of motivation of young people as regards the future.
- The disbelief and the low value assigned to the School and what it offers, beyond teaching and learning.
- The growing fragmentation of socio-cultural identities as a consequence of migrations due to jobs, changes in the family structure and the deterioration in the quality of life with needs for educational and work inclusion.

(Chart 1)

The chart displays the genesis of a *new model in the field of social politics* that makes it possible to overcome the dislocation, fragmentation and sometimes the opposition between the 'private', the 'state' and the 'community'.

Within this framework some alternatives for articulation, cooperation and strategic alliances between the different sectors of the Society (State – Private Sector – Third Sector) have been put forward. They allow the management of different programmes of social and communal development. The action of the State is materialized through the governments that carry out concrete policies, whereas the Civil Society does so through Civil Organizations.

Career Guidance Counselling finds its space in this scheme to develop its social, communal and democratising profile. It is made concrete in the management of different programmes that, although they are not particular to Occupational Counselling, share a common objective: *to promote for each and every citizen the building of a better future arising from dreams, aspirations, and possibilities for personal development and growth, through strategies of intervention especially related to the promotion of employment, ongoing training, job retraining, adaptation to new life situations, socio-cultural diversity.*

The counselling function includes the development of expectations, interests, abilities and knowledge, the preparation to look for information about job opportunities, the search for the first job, the capacity to make decisions about work and personal future, the possibility to fulfil postponed expectations.

It is interesting to point out that when facing a context in which there is a crisis of the formal institutions a certain share of hope is placed on the counselling function of the programmes for social and communal development.

In general a model of intervention by Programmes is given priority, since its permanence depends on the existence of a real social need that maintains the validity of the programme.

The methodology varies according to the context, to the objectives that each Institution pursues, to the human resources and to the training of the coordinators.

The evaluation of the Social Programmes has revealed some of their weaknesses and the need to change the criteria as regards design, implementation, articulation and continuity.

In the following chart some of the weaknesses and new tendencies in social policies are defined:

(Chart 2)

The Third Sector: Community Organizations

Since the '80s, with the arrival of democracy, the local and informal associations, even without the awareness of what they represented as 'social capital', started to be formally organized and to participate in decisions and activities of social politics. At the beginning the topics that summoned people to form solidarity organizations were related to 'human rights' and 'defence of the environment'. Since then, the organizations of the Third Sector have continued to grow, undertaking the search for answers to unfulfilled local needs and also establishing a link of cooperation and joint labour with the Governmental sector.

Nowadays their development at a national level is considerable, with a broadly extended geographical distribution. The CENOC (Centro Nacional de Organizaciones de la Comunidad - National Centre of Community Organizations) registered 5,700 entities until

May 1999, 1,034 of which are in the province of Buenos Aires. Many of them direct their projects towards training, improving the educational level, and training for work insertion. They adopt different legal forms and administrative structures. They present themselves as Cooperative or Civil Associations, Non-Governmental Organizations, or Foundations. They make up the so-called Third Sector, which follows its own management rules to differentiate itself both from the State and from the Market or Private Sector.

- The Cooperative and Civil Organizations are entities of base, centred around the concrete needs of the community. They are usually integrated by people of the same community, with a poorly developed capacity of management. Generally they do not require professionals among their human resources, with a heavy schedule or work contracts. The professional assistance is voluntary.
- The NGO and Foundations constitute the so-called organizations or entities of support, made up by people who are not part of the Community in which they act. Frequently they act by giving support to the organizations of base, through advice, training and donations. They count on human resources for professional training and on organizational structures that allow them to develop programmes and activities with external funding.

The Occupational Counselling in the Field of Community Organizations

The data 'Profile of the Counselling and Employment Services in La Plata and Greater La Plata' show an incipient and asystematic growth in Occupational Counselling in the field of the community organizations that in many cases do not meet the demands unsatisfied by state organizations (Schools, Universities, City Council Centres of Counselling and Information).

Usually the services are aimed at different users:

- adults with incomplete schooling,
- young people looking for their first job,
- recent and temporarily unemployed people,
- long-term unemployed people,
- differently abled individuals,
- workers who need retraining,
- elderly men and women who wish to find new projects.

They have a mediating function, in relation to the complaints and demands of the community sector, starting from the local and regional and then integrating into the provincial field. Even

though they fulfil the needs of today, their sights are set on the future and in the importance of taking care of and improving the present to make sustainable development possible.

Some categories can be established, depending on the objectives that the Programmes aim at:

1. **Educational – Formative:** they link the formative stages, the development of abilities and in many cases the literacy so that the minimum requirements of employability are met.
2. **Work Insertion:** different links are established with the Productive Sector. The productive sector is the one which controls the demand and depending on it the programmes are established. These are aimed at those who have been marginalized from the job market, or with disadvantages to have access to the proposal, or at those who wish to have access to the formal working system and leave the informality aside.
3. **Integration:** special programmes to integrate people with a disability, addiction, etc.
4. **Free time:** it is an area that is beginning to have a strong presence in every counselling programme in the world, basically centred around the orientation towards different lifestyles, during the stages or periods of change.

The programmes and projects are generated in a climate of consensus and participation of the population, and they have the support of and are integrated to the plans of social politics of the State. In some cases they have the support of the Private Sector and International Organizations.

Social Programmes of Counselling and Employment in La Plata and Greater La Plata

Methodology used

- a) The survey of Institutions started with an enquiry to those State Organizations responsible for the articulation and decentralization of Plans and Programmes of Development and Social Politics: City Council, Instituto Provincial del Empleo (Provincial Employment Institute), Instituto de Acción Cooperativa (Cooperative Action Institute), Consejo Provincial del Menor y la Familia (Provincial Council of Minors and Families). Afterwards interviews to representatives from third sector organizations were included.
- b) The sample was elaborated on the basis of Programmes, since in each of them several Institutions are included. In the choice of Programmes the following variables were considered:
 - objectives and topics related to Occupational Counselling
 - integration to Plans of Social Politics of the State

- stability, systematisation and permanence of no less than a year.
- c) The data were registered through personal interviews with people responsible for the Areas and Programmes.

I. Programa ‘Emprendizaje: formación de jóvenes emprendedores’ (‘Entrepreneurship: training of young entrepreneurs’ Programme)

This proposal is framed within the line of activities that the Salvat Foundation develops as regards the problems of Training, Employment and Integration.

Salvat is a non-profit organization, destined to provide free training to unemployed and underemployed people, in order to develop in them attitudes, capacities and abilities that would allow them to face the challenges that the job market poses. In the 1995 – 2000 period it provided 11,963 people with free training for work insertion.

Objectives of the Salvat Foundation

- To promote work at every Level and in every Field of Society
- To stimulate the training of entrepreneurs
- To boost the training and development of microenterprises
- To promote relationships for Cultural Integration

Programmes

- The programmes are developed on a free basis, in different cities and provinces of the Republic of Argentina.
- Training of coordinators for work adjustment
- Support programme for work adjustment
- ‘Group meetings for work adjustment and containment’
- ‘Incubation of ideas for business’
- Entrepreneurship: training of young entrepreneurs
- Retirement planning
- TrabajARTE Programme

Objectives of the ‘Entrepreneurship: Training of young entrepreneurs’ Programme

- Training of young entrepreneurs for their work insertion in a company or developing a microenterprise
- Development of autonomy, responsibility and personal creativity
- Knowledge of the opportunities that the new job market offers

Methodology

The 'Entrepreneurship: training of young entrepreneurs' Programme was developed during 2001 in the city of Ensenada, with the collaboration of Companies from the Area (in agreement with the Dirección de Educación y Cultura de la Provincia de Buenos Aires – Education and Culture Board of the Province of Buenos Aires –) and with the financial support of several companies: Banco Provincia, Telefónica, Orígenes, Banco Río, Edesur. Eight meetings were held, which lasted two hours each.

In each of them, the development of an enterprising attitude, the recovery of self-esteem and of self-confidence are promoted, by using techniques for participation and for 'delving into the internal realities to find strengths and weaknesses that make each case particular'. (Marité Salvat)

The last meetings refer to the design of self-employment projects, self-generation of work spaces, or the devising of possible itineraries to achieve so.

The professionals that participate come from different disciplines: educators, social workers, psychologists, sociologists. In each case they get specific theoretical – practical training at the Foundation.

II. Programa Provincial de Microempresas (Provincial Programme of Microenterprises)

It is a Programme shared by the Ministerio de Producción (Ministry of Production), the Instituto Provincial de Empleo (Provincial Institute of Employment), with the support of the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (Spanish Agency of International Cooperation).

The promotion of microenterprises has vast sectors of the population as potential beneficiaries, which – as a result of the 'spreading of poverty' phenomenon – have reached meaningful dimensions these last years.

The philosophy of the programme lies in stimulating the creativity and enterprising initiative of the community in different groups:

- Young people entering the job market
- Retraining of civil servants for related work units
- Unemployed or underemployed labour
- Professionals, technicians and skilled workers
- For specific sectors marginalized from the working sector: disabled, ex-convicts, drug-addicts in rehabilitation

The microenterprises, even though they are directed towards the demands that the market poses, may act in a wide range of activities and areas: from the 'brain-intensive' ones in the area of electronics and computing, to 'craftwork', such as mechanical services and the manufacturing of cultural objects.

Objectives

- Consolidation of existing posts through financial support
- Training and technical support for established microenterprises
- Generation of productive occupation for unemployed and underemployed people, through the creation of microenterprises
- Stimulation of creativity and enterprising initiative in the community
- More balance in the economic development of the provincial territory

Methodology

Usually a theoretical – practical working methodology is used, with academic activities, activities for the resolution of problems related to the generation of employment, and group activities to favour the development of attitudes for teamwork.

The coordination and development is in charge of a team constituted by professionals from the Instituto Provincial del Empleo (Provincial Institute of Employment), the Dirección Provincial de Producciones Intensivas del Ministerio de la Producción (Provincial Board of Intensive Productions of the Ministry of Production), and the Consejo Provincial del Menor y la Familia (Provincial Council of Minors and Families).

The professionals that participate are trained in Social Work, Anthropology, Psychology, Administration and Cooperativism.

III. Counselling Programmes on Cooperativism

They depend on the IPAC – Instituto Provincial de Acción Cooperativa (Provincial Institute of Cooperative Action). It is an autarchic entity with a board integrated by representatives of the State and Cooperativism. A Consejo Provincial Cooperativo (Cooperative Provincial Council) gathers every cooperative entity of second degree. At a local level, it interacts with the Areas Cooperativas Municipales (Municipal Cooperative Areas).

It develops Actions of consulting, promotion, education, training, preventive supervision, business mediation, design and evaluation of projects and their funding.

Objectives

The IPAC (Provincial Institute of Cooperative Action) has a large number of programmes that place special emphasis on productive retraining and on the preservation and generation of associative employment.

Among those that are directly related to counselling, the following can be cited:

- 1) *Programa de Apoyo al Cooperativismo Empresarial* (Programme of Support to Business Cooperativism), especially the activities that are related to the promotion and emergence of young leaders.
- 2) The associative cooperative training given to teachers from agricultural schools, so that they can transfer the training to their students.
- 3) *Primera Empresa Asociativa de Jóvenes* (First Youth Associative Company). Aims at training and organizing groups of young people between 18 and 25 years of age in search for a productive way out, especially students and graduates from secondary schools, technical colleges and agricultural schools. Those who have approved projects will have access to loans. In these groups, young people develop their enterprising capacity and projects that are possible to carry out tend to appear.

Methodology

In general the programmes are presented as Courses, with different durations depending on the specific objectives of each programme.

The professionals that participate have an academic and ideological training in Cooperativism. Some of the professionals included are from Economic Sciences, lawyers, or related to Social Work. Educators or graduates from Educational Sciences may participate in the design of the course syllabi.

IV. Programa de Capacitación a Distancia en Gestión de Organizaciones Comunitarias (Programme of Distance Training in Management of Community Organizations)

It is carried out with the support of the Fundación Ideas and within the framework of the Programmes of the SERPADE. This Programme is integrated to the Plan Estratégico de la Ciudad de La Plata (Strategic Plan of the City of La Plata), of the City Council and it was selected among many other programmes of social development.

SERPADE is an institution of the Civil Society, which directs its actions towards the strengthening of the neighbourhood organizations that constitute it.

Objectives

The consolidation of popular organizations in their different modalities: neighbourhood groups, producers, small-sized enterprises, cooperatives.

Methodology

Programmes and methodologies of popular education are developed, which have a tendency towards the participation and organization of networks through which training is distributed.

Project 1 – Project for Cooperative Training

Project 2 – Project of Support to Cooperative Training

These projects are carried out through the Red de Organizaciones vecinalistas (Neighbourhood Organizations Network) and with the professional advice of the I.P.A.C. and the Areas Municipales de Acción Cooperativa (Municipal Areas of Cooperative Action).

V. Foro Intermunicipal de Promoción del Empleo (Intermunicipal Forum of Employment Promotion)

The Programme belongs to ADESO (Asociación para el Desarrollo Social – Association for Social Development). The Institution provides counselling, advice and training in response to the local demands that arise from diagnoses produced by interdisciplinary teams.

Objectives

- Attempt of innovation in the field of International Cooperation for Development
- Consolidation of micro- and small-enterprises
- Generation of stable posts
- Strengthening of the institutional capacity of City Councils to assist small entrepreneurs
- Generation of Regional Training Programmes
- Technical Advice

Activities

1. The Counselling role is fulfilled for important sectors of the population which do not possess the most essential information to make decisions, and which do not know how to proceed when faced with different everyday problems.

For instance:

- The unemployed from the Public and Private Sectors due to voluntary and forced retirement, who do not know or did not know what to do with the money from compensation
- The new businesspeople, including many of those unemployed, who look for relief for their family economy through business activities with little or no chances of success
- The existing micro-businesspeople or those in formation, who insist on proposals with no possibilities to compete in the market
- The business, industrial or agricultural sectors which do not find a way to compete and commercialise their products

2. Training of suitable human resources assigned to the Employment Areas, who would develop competencies regarding the following topics:

- Investigation of the local territorial and socio-economic profile
- Group organization and advice
- Cooperative organization and promotion
- Administration and Management Control
- Techniques for project formulation
- Monitoring and evaluation of microenterprising projects

Professionals that participate: The programmes incorporate specialists from different disciplines constituting interdisciplinary teams: sociologists, city planners, socio-cultural events coordinators, pedagogues, economists.

VI. Programme for citizen participation and training in neighbourhoods

This programme is carried out through the Fundación Futuro, Neighbourhood Associations and these articulate their actions with different State organisms: Instituto Provincial del Empleo (Provincial Institute of Employment), Consejo del Menor y la Familia (Council of Minors and Families), and different areas of Municipal management.

The Foundation brings together a group of representatives of the Civil Society with ideas in common on party politics.

Objectives

- To realize programmes of local and neighbourhood development, through citizen education and participation

Through its activities it is incorporated into already existing State programmes.

Activities

- a) Courses and spaces for debate on social issues that are useful for citizen education, political affiliation and training of neighbourhood leaders.
- b) Training Courses, of educational character that fulfil local requirements asystematically: computing courses, public relations courses.
- c) A Career Guidance Counselling course was attempted, with the sole objective of offering a service to the community and in response to a proposal made by a local professional. The idea did not prosper and no activity was carried out.

VII. Programa Integral de Mejoramiento Empresario (Integral Programme of Business Improvement)

It is developed at IDEB (Instituto de Desarrollo Empresario Bonaerense – Instituto of Business Development of the Province of Buenos Aires) and it is executed through Regional Centres and entities of business development, Third Sector entities, City Councils and Business Chambers.

Even though some programmes that are developed are referred exclusively to the Business Sector, there is also a Scholarship System for university apprentices (students and graduates).

For the Business Sector, some programmes for quality improvement are developed, in relation to:

- a. development of foreign trade businesses
- b. of technological consultancy
- c. of business association
- d. diagnosis assisted by projects

For university students or graduates:

- a. insertion programmes in work fields related to their academic training

An agreement is established between the Company and the UNLP (National University of La Plata). In many cases a specific training is made in the company, which is in charge of the expenses, to promote the bridging of the gap between theory and practice, and the specific requirements for the job.

The team of professionals is constituted by economists, businesspeople or professionals related to Business. Many professionals are hired for the presentation of Seminars, Conferences, and Lectures.

VIII. Programa de Orientación e Inserción Laboral para Discapacitados (Programme for the Counselling and Work Insertion of Disabled People)

This programme emerged from the Central Executive Level - Instituto Provincial del Empleo (IPE – Provincial Institute of Employment) in the year 2000. It coordinates proposals that are being developed in different Centres or in subsidized workshops. These experiences up to that moment had no representation at the Provincial Executive level. They were only coordinated from the Dirección General de Cultura y Educación (General Board of Culture and Education), centred around the objectives and implications with the focus only on the Educational aspect.

The creation of cooperatives, organized in the Establishments and Centres of Special Education, is formalized through the Instituto Provincial del Empleo (Provincial Institute of Employment), with monitoring and regulations related to the Regulations on Cooperatives Formation and Employment of Minors and people with disabilities.

The Possibility of work insertion is realized through the different community centres and associations registered in the IPE, with the support of different Programmes of Social Development, both at Provincial and National level.

The Programme also integrates adults with slight and severe disabilities.

The professionals that participate in the Programme depend on the IPE and the Dirección General de Cultura y Educación de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (General Board of Culture and Education of the Province of Buenos Aires).

In the case of the training of adults, the Institute has its own training centre that functions as a NGO.

The staff is under contract and it includes pedagogues, psychologists, and workshop teachers.

The Counselling, Monitoring and Training of differently abled students that attend educational establishments is led by teams of School Counselling that depend on the Dirección de Educación y Cultura de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (this Programme has an ampler reference in the Educational Axis).

IX. Unidad de Capacitación y Desarrollo de Oportunidades Laborales para personas con distintos grados de Discapacidad (Unit for the Training and Development of Job Opportunities for people with different degrees of Disabilities).

It is a project presented and accepted within the Plan Estratégico para el Desarrollo de la Ciudad de La Plata (Strategic Plan for the Development of the City of La Plata).

The Project is justified in the fact that the employment possibilities in the competitive market are extremely limited for differently abled people, and there are activities in plant nurseries that can be carried out by differently abled people with previous training. There are no experiences in this sense.

Objective

To train people with disabilities so that they find work insertion in ornamental, fruit and vegetable plant nurseries in the Region.

Methodology

It shall have an interdisciplinary concept of design and management, with the direct participation of the regional Productive Sector and of the organizations specialized in the problems of people with disabilities.

The responsible Institution is the Facultad de Ciencias Agrarias (School of Agricultural Sciences) of the UNLP (National University of La Plata), which will provide the human resources for the counselling and training of the participants. It is an interdisciplinary project that is based on the previously existing networks constituted by official, university, private and third sector organizations.

X. Programa Incubadora de Empresas (Business Incubators Programme)

It depends on the UNLP, in agreement with the Ministerio de Producción (Ministry of Production) and with the sponsorship of the Comisión de Investigaciones Científicas de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (C.I.C. – Commission of Scientific Investigations of the Province of Buenos Aires). It also articulates with the IPE, the Instituto de Desarrollo Empresarial Bonaerense (Institute of Business Development of the Province of Buenos Aires), and the Fundación Pro-Humanite – Vitae.

This programme, according to the definition of its director, Edgar Willys, undertakes the analysis, study, creation, development and consolidation of innovative small- and medium-sized enterprises.

‘Learning to undertake’ is the phrase that defines this programme.

Objectives

Among its specific objectives the following could be mentioned:

- To encourage the creation of innovative enterprises

- To contribute to the discovery of personal and group capacities to develop enterprises
- To create the right atmosphere for the development of an enterprising attitude
- To discover the potential of intelligent organizations

Activities

1. Development course for entrepreneurs, aimed at students, graduates and businesspeople
2. Training of Trainers. Course aimed at university teachers
3. Training of Incubator Managers

The team of professionals that participate is interdisciplinary: engineers, chemists, economists, Educational Sciences teachers.

The Educational Sciences teachers give an orientation to the design of the courses, in their didactic and pedagogical aspects. They are also concerned with the development of competencies for undertakings, through reflective activities and the development of abilities for decision-making. The methodology used is based on group work.

XI. Programas de Capacitación y Formación de Recursos Humanos (Programmes for the Training of Human Resources)

It is developed within the framework of the Legar Cooperative, in agreement with the City Council of La Plata and Trade Unions from the Region. The activities have been developed since 1993, when the Cooperative was organized, decentralizing from the City Council the task of training Human Resources.

Objectives

- To develop training proposals within the framework of the regional requirements
- To organize Training and Updating Seminars that would make the access to better qualifications in the search for a job possible

Activities

The proposals are developed in articulation with the Instituto Municipal de Producción y Empleo (Municipal Institute of Production and Employment) and Boards and Organizations of the Provincial Government.

The courses are for free, and in 9 years 6,000 people were trained in different occupations, according to the needs identified by State Organizations.

During 2001, together with FENDIM (Federación Argentina de entidades pro-atención a las personas con discapacidad intelectual – Argentinian Federation of Entities for the Attention to People with Intellectual Disabilities), a course for the training of home care assistants for people with complex disabilities was organized as a first experience.

The team of professionals in charge of the elaboration of the courses is constituted by Psychologists, Social Workers, Educational Sciences Professionals and staff members with specific technical training according to the contents of the course.

XII. Programa becas a estudiantes (Programme of Scholarships for Students)

It is a Programme developed by the City Council of La Plata, through its Secretaría de la Juventud (Youth Secretariat). It consists of the allocation of financial support (Scholarships) to students who wish to continue their studies, either at Polimodal or at University. The amount of scholarships is 50, of 150 pesos each.

The presentation of applications exceeds the amount of scholarships available, since in November 2001 a total of 600 applications were submitted.

The professional in charge of the first interviews and the organization of the survey of data and the socio-environmental report is a Social Worker graduated from the UNLP (National University of La Plata).

To grant the scholarship and to make the final selection a Commission takes part, which is constituted by representatives of the City Council, the UNLP and the Dirección de la Juventud Municipal (Municipal Youth Board).

XIII. Programas de tercera edad (Programmes for the Third Age)

It refers to activities developed by the Consejo Municipal de la Tercera Edad (Municipal Council of the Third Age), created in 1993. The activities are carried out through neighbourhood delegations, centres of community promotion (Centros de Fomento), and neighbourhood associations.

Objectives

1. To improve people's quality of life and areas where third age people participate.
2. To acknowledge the cultural heritage of the elderly.
3. To facilitate their access to cultural assets.
4. To develop plans for health education.
5. To integrate the elderly to society.
6. To foster the participation and prominence of the third age.

7. To develop programmes to advise the elderly as regards the existing benefits at a local, provincial and regional level.
8. To organize events to make the most of their free time.
9. To listen to complaints and to issues that derive from the rights of the elderly.

Activities

- Lectures-debates referred to issues of health and prevention.
- Course for care assistants for the elderly, together with the Federación Argentina de Geriatría y Gerontología (Argentinian Federation of Geriatrics and Gerontology), the Sociedad Platense de Geriatría y Gerontología (Geriatrics and Gerontology Society of La Plata), and the Dirección General de Cultura y Educación de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (General Board of Culture and Education of the Province of Buenos Aires).
- Enterprises in forestation in agreement with the Dirección de Cultura y Educación de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (Culture and Education Board of the Province of Buenos Aires).
- Workshop on Can Recycling, in agreement with Empresa Reynolds Argentina (Reynolds Argentina).
- Workshops on singing, tango and choir.
- Torneos Abuelos Bonaerenses (Senior Citizens of the Province of Buenos Aires Tournament) in agreement with the Consejo Provincial del Menor y la Familia (Provincial Council of Minors and Families).
- Free Legal Advice.

The professionals that are included in the programmes depend on the Dirección de Acción Social (Board of Social Action) of the City Council: Social Workers, Psychologists, Socio-cultural Events Coordinators, Physicians, Therapists, Gerontologists, Educational Sciences Professionals.

References

1. Alvarez González, Manuel (1996). Orientación profesional en las organizaciones, en *Orientación Profesional*. Cap. VII. Editorial CEDES Psicopedagogía.
2. Conato, D; Navarro H; Llorente P. (1996). *La experiencia del Foro Intermunicipal de Promoción del Empleo*. Publicación del Foro. Edit Foros.
3. Coraggio, José L (2001). *Políticas de Desarrollo Social en Argentina , posibilidades, limitaciones y nuevos enfoques* en publicación Plan Estratégico Ciudad de La Plata. Año 2001- 2010 Editorial Municipalidad de La Plata – Pag 6- 11

4. Di Pietro, Leonardo (1999). El cambio en los criterios de Gestión de la Política Social. En *Rev. El Observatorio Social*, pag 12 – 14 . Edit Observatorio Social.
5. Labourdette, Sergio (1999). El problema: Estrategia – Institución, en *Orientación – Trabajo – Instituciones*. Cap. V. Editorial UNLP.

Received: April 2001

Revision received: July 2001

Accepted: November 2002