

## 7.8 The sociocultural animation

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**Conceptualisation of the Sociocultural Animation (Spanish initials: ASC). Main principles, objectives, and purposes. Sources, origins, antecedents, evolution, and current situation. Legal aspects. Functions and profile of the Animator. Methodology of the Sociocultural Animation. Approach to the training of Animators. Final reflections.**

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### 1. Conceptualisation of ASC: main principles, objectives, and purposes.

#### Some definitions of ASC.

- “The Sociocultural Animation is defined as the set of social and cultural practices that aim to stimulate the initiative, as well as the participation of individuals in the **process of their own development** and global dynamics of socio-political life in which they are integrated”. (UNESCO).
- The Directorate-General for Cultural Issues (Ministry of Education and Culture) said that the sociocultural animation aims to the participatory and creative awareness of communities **in the process of their own organisation** and fight.
- According to Ezequiel Ander-Egg, it is a **set of social techniques** which, based on a participatory pedagogy, is aimed at promoting voluntary practices and activities. Also, with the active **participation** of people, it is developed in the core of a certain **group** or community and is shown in the various scopes of the development of the life quality.
- According to Hugues de Varine, it is a set of efforts aimed at stimulating the active participation in cultural activities as well as in the movement of innovation and of personal and collective expression
- Antonio del Valle says that the sociocultural animation is considered as an action which tends to create the social dynamism where it does not exist or to favour the cultural and community action, guiding its activity towards **social change**.
- Fernando Cembranos, David H. Montesinos, and María Bustelo defined it as the process focused on the organisation of people to carry out **projects and initiatives from culture and for social development**.

#### The main principles in the concept of sociocultural animation.

There are many definitions of the concept of Sociocultural Animation.

In those selected above, as in many others, there are **five main principles** which together will be useful to clearly define the concept of Sociocultural Animation.

The five principles are: process, methodology, participation, organisation, and social change.

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**Process:**

One of the purposes of the ASC is the modification of dominant and social mentalities and attitudes by promoting new values, new ways of knowing and understanding reality, as well as new ways of operating in it and of acting jointly and collectively. Time is not only demanded, but a continuing and systematic intervention, that is, an intervention process.

**Methodology:**

Reality is complex and varied, and different needs, interests, and situations are presented in the social community according to its various sectors. Consequently, action could not be indiscriminate and generic. An intervention methodology is required, that is, a set of social techniques avoiding an improvised or discontinuous action.

**Participation:**

The ASC implies participation, which is not just the attendance or the possibility to give an opinion about what others do or to do what the others want us to do. It means the increasing possibility and capacity to intervene, to participate in the identification of problems and priorities, in the definition of objectives, in the planning, execution and management of actions, and in the assessment of results. Participation is learnt by participating.

Social participation is one of the first steps to organise the community, and it should be considered as a gradual process in which the usefulness of participation should be perceived and in which the training for the participation is also one of the main requirements. We will stress its importance for the ASC later.

**Organisation:**

It means a collective, caring, organised action. It means growth of the collective initiative, of the social self-organisation, strengthening of civil society, development of the social power, of the collective capacity to give response to needs and interests.

The organisation of people in the sociocultural animation implies believing in the community and working for the participation. Belief in the community, which means the awareness as group, the strengthening of the collective capacity to face and solve problems, and the involvement of the community in its own development.

**Social change:**

It means changes, transformation of the specific reality, as the development of participation aims to participation in the development. For this reason, processes are directly related to specific groups and sectors' needs and interests to change and to improve their collective life.

The sociocultural animation should be a factor and a tool of social change for the social development management.

The existing definitions of the concept of ASC are numerous and, in some cases, different, but if we based on these five principles, I dare to highlight the definition provided by the **Equipo Claves** (Madrid), made up of a group of professionals of the Animation in late eighties (De la Riva, Fernando; Cárdenas, Carmen, et al.). A definition which, in my opinion, mainly includes all the previous definitions:

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The sociocultural animation is a consistent set of methods and techniques which are mainly aimed at promoting processes of social participation and developing the leading role of citizens in the social and cultural life of their community, in their development, to transform it according to their interests and needs.

### Other principles

If we keep revising the numerous definitions of ASC, we also find other elements which complement its conceptualisation:

### Culture

In general, the concept to which culture refers in the ASC is “anthropological”. Culture is the set of ways of thought, expression, and behaviour of a certain community or a group: their story, the human action, their context, etc. In this sense, the ASC intends that, in a period of culture apathy and homogenisation, it would be essential to recover, to preserve, and to strengthen the own identity marks to face the challenges of a changing world. The ASC not only rejects the **cultural diversity** but understands and affirms it always from the respect to others and as a factor or personal and mutual enrichment.

**Fernando Cembranos** defined culture as a set of habits, ways, knowledge, and demonstrations which have been configured by the people as the result of the struggle for survival and their positioning for the important things of life. In his opinion, the ASC works for the **conscious culture**, a culture which is not a result but a conscious decision of how we want to be, which knowledge do we want to develop. It is a culture looking to the future, even when it is supported in the unconscious culture, the culture of the past.

But there is another step, which is the ASC’s aim: not just a conscious culture, but an **intelligent culture**. It could be called as the work for the development of the “social intelligence”. It is not just acting collectively, but intelligently. That is, to have the capacity to analyse reality and to respond to problems existing in it. To have the capacity to modify approaches and responses according to a changing reality. To have capacity to criticise and to get rid of those aspects of “culture” which oppose to the growth of people, limit their possibilities, and favour the resignation and the social boredom.

The social intelligence should also be a previous step towards the social creativity resulting from the capacity to generate responses and to build up new spaces for an incomplete, unfinished and unfair reality. Creativity which implies the belief that there is a place for the contributions of the group, and if not, it should be found.

Reality is not definite and depends on what organisations are able to include when they become aware of their responsibility **in the social construction of reality**, in its transformation.

### Cultural democratisation and cultural democracy

The ASC aims at going beyond the objective of making cultural goods available for everyone. Its objective is that people move from being mere spectators and “culture consumers” (cultural democratisation) to being creators, producers, and main figures of it in their environment (cultural democracy). The difference of both concepts is shown below:

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#### Democratización cultural

Difundir los beneficios de la cultura al conjunto de la población.

La práctica de la democratización cultural consiste en proporcionar conocimientos culturales, en hacer participar de los beneficios de la élite cultural.

Cerrar la brecha o foso que produce la desigual posesión de bienes culturales.

#### Cultura como consumo

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Estrategia de integración       | 7. En los templos culturales           |
| 2. Reservada a los iniciados       | 8. Recepción                           |
| 3. 4Cultura "Museística"           | 9. Burocracia cultural                 |
| 4. Incremento del mercado cultural | 10. Cambios inducidos                  |
| 5. Cultura Culta                   | 11. Política cultural desde la cúspide |
| 6. Pasividad. Consumo Cultural     |  |

#### Industria cultural

El rol institucional de la animación es en este caso, el de hacer circular todo tipo de discurso cultural de la manera más eficaz posible.

El animador/a actuaría como mediador entre el arte y la ciudadanía; su función es la de trasvasar bienes culturales.

#### Democracia cultural

La práctica de la democracia cultural consiste en asegurar a individuos, grupos, o comunidades, los instrumentos para que con libertad, responsabilidad y autonomía puedan desarrollar su vida cultural.

#### Cultura de participación

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Estrategia participación             | 7. Actividad   |
| 2. Cambio Autónomo                      | 8. Creación Cultural                                     |
| 3. Abierta a todos/as                   | 9. Participación   |
| 4. Libre Expresión                      | 10. Allí donde vive la Gente                             |
| 5. Crecimiento de la actividad cultural | 11. Movimiento Cultural. Política Cultural desde la Base |
| 6. Cultura Viva                         |  |

Creación cultural	
Revolución cultural	
El rol institucional de la animación es el de generar procesos de participación cultural de la manera más amplia posible.	El animador/a es un catalizador que ayuda a desatar un proceso de dinamización cultural.

## Participation

We go back again to the concept of participation because it is key to understand the ASC's proposal.

Participation becomes a method and a **main objective** at the same time.

The ASC aims at —in an automatic, passive, and dismembered society— encouraging and developing the initiative, the active participation of people in the life of their community, in their environment.

### Why participating, from the ASC's point of view

- As a basis and demand of human caring, people, as social beings, need to mix, to communicate, and to share with others.
- As a citizenship's right, as free people who have the right to be informed, to give their opinion, and to take part in the political and social life of the community.

### For what participating, from the ASC's point of view

To participate, so that our affairs operate better according to people's interests and needs and not just to an economic minority which determines the affairs of the whole Community.

- Participation is the exercise of democracy. It gives the formal democracy a social content, making formal rights real.
- Participation keeps legitimacy and makes the representative democracy good over time.
- Participation is the development of solidarity. It develops and contributes to the collective responsibility.
- Participation strengthens pluralism. It makes possible the free development of ideas, and fights sectarianism and dogmatism.
- Participation allows better knowledge of reality and suggests the direction of its transformation.
- Participation contributes to the social education of citizenship and favours social organisations.

For **de la Riva**, and from the ASC's concept, participation is understood as a process, and three main requirements are necessary to make this process effective:

Desire to participate. Firstly, it is required that people want to participate; the desire to participate is closely related to motivation as a result of the personal values of an individual as well as of social values of a community.

To know how to participate. Secondly, it is essential that people know how to participate, that is, that they have the training and information required.

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Possibility to participate. Thirdly, and finally, people should have the possibility to participate, so it is necessary that they are collectively organised as well as they collectively express their opinions, demanding channels through which they could participate in public affairs of general concern.

These “ingredients” are necessary for a suitable participation: motivation (desire), training (knowledge), and organisation of means (possibility) are extrapolated from a macrosocial position, such as the general community, to a microsocal position, such as an association, being configured as a valid scheme of work in a sociocultural animation project.

## **Group**

The **group as referent**, the strengthening of the associative fabric as a goal, not objective.

The ASC is related to the field of relational elements, of interpersonal relationships, to the strengthening of groups and social networks, to the caring organisation of people, and to the commitment to social associations and movements.

To favour the training of groups, to develop the existing networks —formal and informal—, to promote the interpersonal knowledge, the mutual confidence, the identification of common similarities and identities, the recognition and respect of diversities, the creation of relational links, happiness, humour... That the need of sharing is a satisfactory and gratifying experience, thus facilitating the change.

The use of active and dynamic methods and techniques for this purpose.

The way of understanding the role of animators as a driving force of the group process rather than “leaders”, masters. The main figure in the ASC is the group, not animators.

## **Communication**

Communication, dialogue, as a **learning and work instrument**.

The interpersonal communication inside groups and associations as well as the social communication in the set of the social communication are basic principles of the sociocultural animation.

By way of a summary: to finish

To finish this chapter, I would like to mention the contribution by **Toni Puig**, who set out the ASC’s key points which are **mainly obtained from the many and pioneering French references on this subject matter**.

There is a common denominator in all these points: **the structuring of a strong, creative and open territorial community**, with a **sociocultural fabric** with initiative and solidarity:

- All points stand out the creation of social groups which aimed to be significant due to their proposals in a territory.
- They stress the importance of social communication, of the mouth-to-mouth to cooperate in the structuring of a territory with a greater life quality.

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- The figure of the animation team and of the sociocultural animator is important to favour collective and social groups and projects.
- All contributions opted for active and no authoritarian pedagogies to intervene in groups.
- Animation is an effective method to encourage the awareness of people and the strengthening of the critical thought in the pursuit of the transformation of economic, social, political and cultural structures.
- There are little contributions related to the concept of culture, aside from the differentiation between cultural democracy and democratisation and those related to a cultural change in attitudes, the ways of being related to each other and of creating. Culture as a way of being and doing.

In short, within an overall territorial development project, the ASC contributes—according to Puig— the creation of groups as project, interrelated groups in cooperation networks, groups as elements to structure a sociocultural fabric with initiative and solidarity.

## 2. Sources, origins, antecedents, evolution, and current situation. Legal aspects

### Theoretical-practical sources of the sociocultural animation in Spain

For **Xavier Úcar**, from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the recent story of the social education and, especially, of the sociocultural animation, shows that the first educational actions developed in community scopes in the sixties and seventies were created in a context of need as a result of, at least, two processes:

- A community reconstruction process.
- A fight process against dictatorship.

With one or another objective, informal social agents, in most cases with no theoretical training and technical instruments, undertook the socio-community work with enthusiasm, wilfulness, and confidence in the future. They were the precursors of current social educators.

Those first socio-educational supervisors, conscious of their training deficiencies, took as much as possible from any useful source to organise, to systematise, and in sum, to improve their own practices. The scope of the socio-educational intervention in general and especially that of the animation was receptive of the theories and the experiences developed in other countries in the sixties and seventies.

The concept of ASC emerged in Europe after the Second World War. The aim was to reconstruct a broken and badly structure society by promoting the development of a new social fabric, by promoting civic initiatives, and by generating a new cultural European renaissance, from the values of democracy, tolerance, and peace among people.

For Úcar, theoretical-practical sources of the sociocultural animation in Spain emerged—in those years and in the next two decades— from at least six different trends:

### ***The cultural trend from French-speaking countries:***

The idea based on that culture could be a development driver from France. The sociocultural action was an appropriate instrument for making possible and generating self-organisation and dynamisation processes of

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territories and communities.

Known names in this context are: **André Malraux, Pierre Moulinier, Pierre Besnard, M. Simonot, Peuple et Culture**, etc.

Through their words, we could access to the intervention practices they developed, to their dynamisation experiences of groups and communities, to their ways of organisation, to animator's curriculum vitae, and finally, to theoretical reflections concerning all the aspects mentioned above.

They were usually constituted as mandatory models and referents for the experiences and initiatives which were implementing in our country.

### ***The Latin American trend of social work:***

It clearly opted for the sociocultural animation as a community work methodology. From this perspective, the sociocultural animation was understood as a social technology.

The practices of sociocultural animation in the context of this trend are mainly characterised by:

- The adjustment of the animation project to the specific characteristics of the territory and to the community aimed at intervening.
- The provision of specific and clear objectives previously defined.
- The control on the part of animators of a technical storehouse which is enough broad and varied to deal with unexpected facts.
- The main representative, the inspirer of most sociocultural animation works developed by this trend in Spain was **Ezequiel Ander-Egg**.

### ***The Latin American trend of social work:***

It was led by **Paulo Freire's** ideas, who represented, defended and showed a new way of education.

This author provided a philosophical-anthropological framework for the sociocultural and educational intervention as well as appropriate methodological instruments to update it. His pedagogical-political ideas and actions emerged in an environment lack of freedoms which was very similar to that of the Spanish society in that period; this is the reason why it was easily accepted and quickly disseminated.

The sociocultural practices of this trend are criticisms, policies, and aim at generating consensual processes of emancipation and self-determination in groups, communities, and territories in which they are produced.

*Ateneos obreros* [cultural associations], houses of small towns, and popular universities were a very appropriate breeding ground throughout the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century for the emergence of the sociocultural animation by the mid of the 20th century.

Popular universities, as centres particularly developing activities of popular education, were the first in accepting and supporting experiences of sociocultural animation.



### ***The community development trend***

It comes from the Anglo-Saxon scope. It emerged in Spain at the beginning of the sixties. From the beginning, it was more linked to the social and sociological work than to the socio-educational work. It was understood in our country as the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of the experiences and practices of sociocultural animation from French-speaking contexts.

The most representative author of this trend in Spain has been throughout all these years **Marco Marchioni**.

### ***Trend of education in free time and of the pedagogy of leisure:***

It is difficult to talk in the set of the Spanish state of a homogeneous development of this type of experiences.

In Catalonia, however, the so-called "**Educació en el lleure**" was created as a very important educational movement in the scope of childhood and youth. Although different experiences related to the education of free time in Catalonia are found from the first years of the 20th century, it truly increased in the sixties and especially in the following decade, with the arrival of the democracy to our country.

To conclude:

The reflection and the practice of the sociocultural animation in Spain throughout the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century are based on these five trends.

Due to the lack of a tradition of a socio-educational work which is strong enough to have an own entity, it could be concluded that our country has become an influential point in which socio-educational traditions, which are culturally very different, have met in the theoretical-practical configuration of what is today the sociocultural animation.

Such plurality of influences and the lack of an exceptional and native voice could justify that the sociocultural animation has had a low profile in our country.

### **Background and evolution of ASC in Spain, as well as its current situation**

Over time, the sociocultural animation has evolved towards own and specific ways of understanding and developing the socio-educational practice. It was previously necessary to overcome a period in which the lack of definition, the ambiguity, and the conceptual confusion —undoubtedly the result of the diversity of theoretical-practical traditions mentioned above— characterised the reality of the sociocultural animation in Spain.

The lecturer Úcar distinguished several stages and explained the evolution of ASC in our country.

#### ***Until 1959.***

**Until 1959, it was not possible to talk about sociocultural animation in Spain** (term coined in France in 1945). But it did not emerge from the void as there were several social education and popular experiences which historically gave rise to the emergence of the ASC.

Some initiatives proposed by the secular humanism (which inspired the Enlightenment and liberalism) or by religious institutions, and even from inside the dictatorship itself are mentioned below:

- Holiday camps, school trips as a new pedagogy in the open air.
- Methods of the **Modern School of Francisco Ferrer y Guardia**.
- Initiatives from the Free Teaching Institution (Spanish initials: ILE), which were created by Giner de los Ríos in 1876 and inspired in the humanist principles of the “Krausism”. It also inspired the Spanish educational and cultural life from 1875 to 1939.
- **National Pedagogical Museum. Popular Universities and Cultural Associations.**
- **Pedagogical Missions**, antecedent of the ASC in Spain. From 1931 to 1936. They were created in the Second Republic by a Decree on May 29, 1931. They were managed and inspired by Manuel Bartolomé Cossío. Personalities such as Antonio Machado, Pedro Salinas, María Moliner, Federico García Lorca with the theatre experience *La Barraca*, etc., took part in them.
- During the years of Franco's dictatorship, several programmes related to the University Outreach were implemented, as well as to the recovery of folklore. Teleclubs were implemented, and familiar and social training centres were created in 1959 by *Mujeres de Acción Católica* to promote urban and rural popular means for married women. These centres were at odds with the Feminine Section of the Movement as this organisation was considered unique and competent in the woman field.

These actions were carried out in a context of lack of public freedoms (association, expression, opinion, and demonstration) and under an ideological control which hinders to classify them as activities of the sociocultural animation.

### ***The sixties and seventies***

To summarise, it could be said that the sixties and seventies were **a period of numerous theoretical-practical influences which, little by little, constituted the sociocultural animation.**

At first, the sociocultural animation is understood as a sort of “social religion” which could be useful to solve most or all social problems. In this period, “militancy” (as a way of support) and “vocation” (as a reason to intervene) characterised certain practices which were particularly developed in contexts of need and, in most cases, in contexts of lack of freedom. The speech of the sociocultural animation in those years was vocational and characterised by the commitment of the agent to a problematic social reality.

Also, in this first period and as a result of the heterogeneity, the disorganisation, the lack of coordination of animation practices which were developed over the whole geography of the country, the lack of solid and clear theoretical bases on which controlled actions were based, and the lack of training of animators who acted in groups and communities, a scientific and technical basis was demanded, as well as a theoretical clarification.

The theoretical-practical trend from French-speaking countries is divided in our country into two lines which delimit two different ways of acting in reality, as well as into two different professional profiles. This division corresponds to two ways of understanding culture.

At first, the sociocultural animation and the cultural animation were considered —mainly in Catalonia— as similar intervention methodologies acting in and with the culture of groups and communities.

By the end of the eighties, both began to be differentiated as socio-community intervention methodologies:

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The former was mainly focused on the socio-educational work.

The latter turned into “cultural management” and was focused on the strictly cultural action.

An anthropological concept of culture will be at the base of the sociocultural animation, whereas a concept of culture, understood as arts and heritage, will be at the base of cultural management.

The concept of popular education, predominant in the Spanish reality of the educational work outside school until the sixties, is confused and mixed with the concept of sociocultural animation which, at least in the terminology and in the professional literature of our country, finally replaced it.

As a result of the Anglo-Saxon cultural tradition, the community development is considered as an alternative work methodology of that from French-speaking context.

Throughout these years, both methodologies —sociocultural animation and community development— have been together in the social-community work of our country, although their relationship is not very clear.

The sociocultural animation has been mainly linked to interventions which stress the relational, educational and promotional component, whereas the community development has focused its action mainly on the community fact, that is, on the process of collective self-management of the community. The result is that the former is part of studies on social education, and the latter is linked to sociological-political studies.

Both the sociocultural animation and the community development, both understood as a process or product implemented from an educational, social or sociological-political scope, aim to the empowerment of people, groups, and communities.

In our context, the sociocultural animation was soon linked to education in free time and to the pedagogy of leisure. The sociocultural animation, as “heirress” to the popular education, was mainly addressed to an adult audience, whereas education in free time worked with children and young people.

Nowadays, activities, for example, of education in free time addressed to adults and old people are available, as well as animation activities for children and young people.

### ***Last years of the seventies***

In the seventies, **activities mainly emerged in the Catholic Church** (Caritas, Scout, Júnior Movement, Holidays Centres, Cultural Weeks, Youth Clubs, Christians, Young Christian Workers (JCW), and Worker's Catholic Action Brotherhood (Spanish initials: HOAC)) **and in Neighbourhood Movement**, which was included in the neighbourhoods of the main cities through their associations. In these years, a series of performances started to structure the civic movement.

The following activities should also be mentioned:

- In 1971, the *Fondo de Cultura de Popular* emerged from the Editorial Marsiega.
- In the last years of the seventies, the Ministry of Culture started the publication of books on cultural policy, animation, and animators.

- In 1982, the First Sociocultural animation and Town Congress was held in Madrid.
- Popular Universities and Popular Culture Centres reappeared. From this point, several experiences took place with different groups and scopes.

### ***The eighties***

The eighties were a magnificent period. The sociocultural animation was consolidated as a socio-educational intervention which was different from the other interventions, such as cultural management or free time.

In short, the eighties are years of institutionalisation and professionalisation of the Animation.

The first democratic town councils and then the incipient Autonomous Regions and the Central Government turn the Sociocultural Animation, together with the Education for Adults, into an essential tool of their social and cultural intervention.

Public schools to train animators were created in town councils and autonomous regions. Degree programmes were regulated. Many books are published, and meetings, congresses, and sessions were multiplied. Positions were created under this designation.

The overview of the socio-educational intervention in Spain in the eighties was very varied and heterogeneous. Many intervention agents acted with people and groups of all ages, mainly outside school and both in-need and normalised situations.

The nomenclature is very varied: specialized educators; street educators; educators in an open place; educators in a closed place; free time instructors; working instructors; occupational instructors for adults; literates; educators for adults, community animators; social animators; civic animators; sociocultural animators; local development agent; entrepreneurs; educators for the elderly, etc.

In this period, there were many initiatives of sociocultural animation, which were distributed irregularly through the State and characterised by being very heterogeneous as well as by the lack of any type of coordination among them.

The eighties were considered, I mention again, the decade of the consolidation of the sociocultural animation in Spain as a socio-educational intervention methodology. A consolidation undoubtedly facilitated by the democratic context recently established in our country. In this period, the speech on the animation was rich, diversified and very present in the social life of many communities and neighbourhoods of our State.

### ***The nineties***

It was the period of the modernisation and, consequently, of the normalisation of the sociocultural animation as a strategy of socio-educational intervention methodology.

An appropriate intervention strategy is considered for specific, marginal and disadvantages groups and sectors, among others, but not as a fundamental strategy of cultural and social policy.

The cultural management is imposed to try to make a wide and quality cultural offer available for everyone.

The sociocultural animation, which had been so far heritage of volunteers and technicians trained by local

administrations —fundamentally, but not exclusively—, is institutionalised by being included in universities and is constituted as a socio-educational profession. The inclusion in universities as part of the curriculum vitae of **Social Education studies** does not imply, however, the automatic existence of a professional of the sociocultural animation, but a social educator who can develop functions or actions of animation, of specialised education, and of education for adults.

By the mid of the nineties, a new professional emerged and which was lastly called “sociocultural animator”. It is a professional certificate which is obtained after finishing the **advanced vocational training course in Sociocultural Animation (Vocational Education and Training (VET))**.

According to the very different variables, such as the ideological assignment, the theoretical tradition of the professional context, the theoretical-practical sources available, the practices carried out, and the experience itself, several authors and agents of the sociocultural animation respectively joint to two Latin American trends, polarising between those defending the exclusiveness of technological interventions and those defending the exclusiveness of the critical praxis. In the nineties, the critical orientation takes place mostly in our context. Orientation which, after overcoming the approaches exclusively technological, is characterised by the pursuit of the emancipation of communities through practices of democratic, collaborative and participatory animation.

Nowadays, the supposed antinomy “technological action versus critical praxis” seems to be disappeared in the own complexity of a socio-educational reality which escapes from simplistic approaches favouring homogeneous visions of reality.

The sociocultural animation is moving from being a specific professionalisation sector of the social education to be increasingly considered as a transversal methodology of sociocultural animation which could be used both in the context of education for adults and in the specialised education, including social education in the latter.

By the end of the nineties, in Spain, the first professional association for social educators (Catalan initials: CEESC) was created in Catalonia. The Professional Association of Specialised Educators in Catalonia (Spanish initials: APESC) played an important role in the creation of such association. Associations of social education students, groups of sociocultural animators, and groups of educators for adults also participated in such process, but with a lower specific weight and with less organisation and infrastructure. The first task developed by the new professional association is the professional qualification of more than 5,000 social educators.

### ***The 21st century***

In the last years of the nineties, **all aspects related to the sociocultural animation were gradually disappearing**, coinciding with the inclusion of the training of animators in universities (Social Education).

The Social Education’s Degree programme, studies including the training of animators, grouped the different social agents, who had acted in neighbourhoods and communities so far, into a unique professional profile.

On the other hand, speeches on animation were not very usual and lost their freshness and strength from the eighties.

In the first years of 2000, the sociocultural animation was hardly mentioned and there were not many publications using this terminology.

In the last fifteen years, a live, dynamic and hopeful speech has turned into an almost non-existent speech.

Public administrations themselves seem to opt for an Anglo-Saxon model which favours terminologies more linked to the community development rather than to the sociocultural animation.

### ***The ASC in our neighbouring countries***

In compensation, the peak of the sociocultural animation in some of our neighbouring countries and also in some countries in Latin America in these last years should be mentioned.

In Portugal, there was a very important movement for several years concerning the sociocultural animation, and a specific full undergraduate degree programme has been accepted for the training of animators.

In France, the country in which the animation system is consolidated to the point of having professionals in the five levels which are officially approved in Europe, the speech of the professional animation has been revitalised in the last years due to the works by J.P. Augustin and J.C. Gillet. The latter has made a very interesting and updated theoretical model to understand the function that the sociocultural animator performs today in community dynamics.

### **Final comments: the future of the animation**

Through these analyses concerning theoretical-practical sources, the historical evolution, and the state of the professionalisation of the sociocultural animation in Spain, different problems related to the sociocultural animation has been shown in the academic discipline and the scope of professionalisation.

Xavier Úcar summarised them as follows:

- The lack of an exceptional and native speech on the sociocultural animation.
- In general, the sociocultural animation has had a low development profile in our country.
- In recent years, freshness in speeches on sociocultural animation has been lost.
- The term “sociocultural animation” is not very used today in the publications on the methodology of the social intervention.
- The sociocultural animation is more and more considered as a professional function or as a cross-sectoral methodology of the intervention.

Two other considerations: they could be cause, effect, or both:

1. Unlike in the scopes of the specialised education and of the education for adults, associations and groups of sociocultural animators have not generated, in the set of the State, an organisation or infrastructure which is state or regional enough to participate —in terms of equality— in the interchanges of political forces which have influenced the process of creating a professional association for social educators.

Consequently, dominant speeches —due to the problems related to the education for adults, which becomes less important— are those from the specialised education, which is more and more identified in our country with the social education.

2. Unlike in other countries, in Spain there are not specific university studies related to the sociocultural animation.

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It can be stated that the sociocultural animation in our country is today between the excessive specificity of free time and the specificity of a social education excessively focused, both academically and professionally, on the scope of the need and problematic situations, either personal or social.

## Legal aspects of the ASC in Spain

### *Background*

- **DECREE OF 1957:** Due to the initiatives taken in the diocese, the first regulation took place in 1957. Such regulation regulated the conditions to hold camps, lodgings, etc. It was unnecessary until that moment as everything was included in the internal standards of the only possible youth movement. The organisation of all youth activities was ruled by this Decree for 17 years. There was a lack of pedagogical aspects and its objective was mainly to protect the public order in the Dictatorship.
- **DECREE OF 1974:** Its origin is in the fact that some political parties used in secrecy, in summers before 1974, camps to train members or leaders for these organisations which “moved” as they could. It was signed by Prince Juan Carlos as Chief of Staff due to Franco’s illness. It was also a Decree on Public Order. This Decree included, among other few things, that the person managing activities should have a certificate.
- **ORDER ON NOVEMBER 25, 1976:** As a complement of the information established in the Decree of 1974, this order lastly recognised the right of some entities, both public and private, to organise and to promote the training and education of the staff managing youth activities.

### *State legislation:*

- **ORDER OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE ON SEPTEMBER 7, 1982.** The term “Sociocultural Animation” appears for the first time. This order approved the regulatory standards of the centres of ASC.

### *Autonomous legislation in Andalusia*

- **DECREE 239/1987, SEPTEMBER 30,** which regulated free time and sociocultural animation schools in the Andalusian Autonomous Region.
- **DECREE 292/1987, DECEMBER 9,** which created the Public Free Time and Sociocultural Animation School in Andalusia.
- **ORDER ON MARCH 21, 1989,** which established training programmes of free time and sociocultural animation schools in the Andalusian autonomous region.

### *Emergence of training schools in sociocultural animation in the Spanish autonomies*

As exercise of the competences transferred by the Central Government to Autonomies, standards emerged since 1981 to recognise the Schools for Free Time Educators for children and young people and Schools of ASC.

Fecha de aparición	Comunidad Autónoma
06.11.1981	Cataluña
23.02.1984	Baleares
23.02.1985	Valencia: Escuela Generalitat.
17.07.1985	Madrid.(Completada normas 03.04.86)
31.07.1985	Valencia: Escuelas privadas.
22.10.1985	País Vasco
22.10.1985	Galicia: "Escuela Gallega Sociología Juvenil"
31.10.1985	Murcia. Escuela Oficial.
24.01.1986	Cantabria
15.04.1986	La Rioja
10.07.1986	Asturias
02.10.1986	Aragón
15.10.1986	Castilla-La Mancha. 3 de Marzo, Titulación Monitores.
16.12.1986	Extremadura
04.06.1987	Castilla-León
09.06.1987	Cataluña (Nueva legislación hasta 20.07.1987)
09.12.1987	Andalucía

According to **Antonio Ramos Estaun**, the frequency of dates could be explained in several ways:

- The long tradition of “Esplai” in Catalonia.
- The influence of the standards of the most experienced communities.
- The lack of interest on this issue of some communities.
- The desire of others to obtain from the experience of others as much as possible.

### 3. Functions, sociocultural animators’ profile

#### Functions, animators’ role:

What sociocultural animators do? How their work is planned?

#### ***To promote processes of change, transformation, and improvement of life quality***

The person working in the sociocultural animation is an agent who encourages, facilitates, and dynamises the processes of group and social participation so that certain social groups or sectors could develop the personal and collective capacity to change their specific reality, thus improving their life quality with a leading role and autonomy.

#### ***To encourage participation as a method and objective***

The person mainly acts in the expansion and strengthening of the social participation networks.

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### ***To promote knowledge of reality***

Any change process of reality implies to use resources, needs, and characteristics of the reality in which the work is carried out and, consequently, the intervention agent should know and analyse the reality of their territory and know to “teach” the group how to know and analyse it. The person therefore knows the needs and interests of their environment.

### ***To educate in values***

This task has an educational dimension —of social education— as the person facilitates the learning of participation, of social organisation: to know the reality itself, to change attitudes and habits, to develop capacities and skills individually, collectively, etc. It strengthens values related to the concept of solidarity, respect, interculturality, coexistence, peace, etc.

### ***To motivate, to organise, to promote initiative and action, and to create community***

One of the functions is to stimulate the motivation of groups, to strengthen their self-esteem, to facilitate the development of their creativity, to cause their initiative by facilitating their action.

### ***To mediate***

The animator relates, channels demands, mediates. Therefore, they should learn how to negotiate to consider the negotiation as a fundamental tool for their work.

### ***To work in groups, to promote their organisation by helping to take responsibilities and to assess their initiatives***

The animator is available for groups and their processes. The group is the subject of the animation processes, whose objective is, among others, promoting the greatest autonomy as possible, their self-organisation.

### ***To work in a territory***

They intervene in the specific framework of a neighbourhood, an association, a region, etc., always in a known territory where it is possible to establish relationships.

## **Profiles and abilities of animators**

### ***Ideology and critical view***

Animators should be critical with all around them, which is the result of a commitment with reality.

Also, they should sense of humour and capacity of self-criticism and awareness of their limitations.

They should be open, tolerant and flexible people; they should not act in a biased way. This does not mean to be “neutral” as they should have their own idea of the world, their ideology, their value scale, etc. They should not

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impose them but facilitate that the group makes their own idea.

### ***Commitment, involvement***

Animators do not act “from outside”. Commitment, involvement, and integration in the group are required, as well as in the social territory in which they act.

### ***Global approach, comprehensive vision***

Animators should not consider just immediate objectives, but global objectives. The “scope” of the animation is the daily life with a global approach.

### ***Capacity for observing, listening, and communicating***

Communication is a fundamental instrument in the animators’ work. So, they should be open and communicative, people open to dialogue, with a great capacity for observing, listening, and empathising.

### ***Coordination and teamwork***

The intervention work in a numerous and varied reality implies a numerous and varied view which, therefore, hinders sociocultural animators to work alone. Also, the permanent support of a team is required. They consider the teamwork with specialised educators, municipal technicians, social workers, cultural managers, experts in certain issues, etc.

### ***Well-organised, reflective, adaptable***

Animators should be systematic in their work, but not inflexible. They should adapt to different situations and changes. They should not be interventionist, they should respect the group, their processes and paces.

### ***Imaginative and creative***

Imagination and creativity are the main bases in their work.

### ***Training***

It is based on characteristics which will be result of animators’ personality, but others are learnt.

### ***Knowledge and methodological use***

Objectives are so important as the method used to achieve them. In this regard, a methodological training is required.

### ***Knowledge and instrumental use***

Animators should have useful tools to change their reality and to give response to the needs of the development of groups, to know how they work and how use them.

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### ***Organisation and process management***

As agents of change, they consider medium- and long-term processes. Processes that they should know how to plan. Also, consecutive goals should be established.

### ***Experience***

It is based on the reality of each group, of the individual and collective experience of their members, of their actual interests, needs, and demands, of their “culture”, of their knowledge, values, codes, ways of thinking, feeling, expressing, and behaving in their life context... To recognise such experience, such reality, and to turn it into a starting point of change.

**Sociocultural animators’ profile** implies defining their ways of intervention based on:

- Their knowledge.
- Their abilities.
- Their participation and autonomy.
- Their attitudes.

Quintana Cabanas presented four scopes of professional training of sociocultural animators based on the last three ways mentioned above.

- **Scope of Personality:** Affective maturity, psychical balance, basic satisfaction, self-approval, confidence in themselves, and sense of reality.
- **Scope of Aptitudes:** Imagination, to be a person of resources, dynamism, flexibility, to know how to organise, as well as to understand problems.
- **Scope of Attitudes:** Perseverance, impartiality, good will, service attitude, confidence and interest in people.
- **Scope of Relationships:** Capacity for communicating, leading, knowing how to be good with people. Stimulating force, collaboration spirit, and tolerance.

In the scope of knowledge, **María Salas and Paloma López Ceballos** think that animators should learn, as journalists, how to be expert in general issues, that is, to know how to use the information and to turn to the specialist when it is necessary.

In this sense, they should acquire:

- Certain knowledge on **sociology** to understand the social dynamisms acting in the world they live.
- Certain knowledge on **anthropology** to move in culture.
- **History**, to know where it comes from and which historical heritage is influencing them and their community.
- **Personal and group psychology**, which is useful to rationalise their experiences of interpersonal relationship and the phenomena they observe in groups.
- Knowledge on **economic** laws and on conditionings influencing and sometimes determining social decisions.
- Certain knowledge on **pedagogy** on which methods of animation, their possibilities, and their limitations

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are based.

- Some organisation, administration, and management techniques.
- Certain information on **cultural policy and legislation** which influences their professional work.
- Knowledge about centres, sources of information, etc.

Also, they should know how to do many certain tasks:

- **To make a project**, including all phases from the appearance and the definition of the problem to the establishment of the adequate budget.
- **To carry out the project** with the collaborations expected, in the time established and with the media assigned.
- **To constitute a group and to make** that it positively **operates**.
- **To conduct a meeting**, distinguishing the discussion moments from the decision-making moments, using the appropriate methods in each case.
- To write a report.
- **To assess a project**.
- **To place isolated actions in the dynamics of a comprehensive development project**.

## 4. Methodology of the sociocultural animation

### Methodology of the ASC

There is not maybe a methodology of the sociocultural animation, but there are different methodological proposals from which common elements constituting the intervention from the ASC's view could be drawn.

Such common elements, which define a methodological intervention model, are as follows:

- ASC's main objective is to develop the collective initiative, the leading role of the group or community in its own development process. So, **each intervention step should be carried out by the group itself** progressively and according to its increasing capacity. Of course, with the support of animators.
- The ASC should plan, by following the steps of **the intervention, the own actions by addressing them to make possible the previous point. In other words, the presence of the intervention of the animator should be reduced as the group increases its presence.**
- The assessment is not, could not be, an isolated moment when the process finishes, but is permanent throughout the whole process, with the maximum group participation.
- The assessment is always a new starting point to reconsider the new group practice.

To sum up, there is a key element or common aspect including all the methodological intervention in the sociocultural animation: **the participatory methodology, which in all its moments, phases or actions tends to generate processes in which the group, the community, is involved.**

As it is a participatory methodology, it is flexible and adaptive in each moment of the intervention. That is, it changes and enriches according to the interventions and contributions of recipients themselves, their interests and concerns, and even their limitations.

## The four “classical” steps of the intervention from the ASC’s point of view

Participation is therefore the key element which comprehensively joins the four classical steps (Analysis of reality or previous diagnosis, Planning, Execution, and Assessment) of any intervention in the sociocultural animation and establishes an own methodological model.

So, it is a methodological proposal which considers participation and recovers the voice of social agents and of the communities in which they intervene.

### *The analysis of reality*

The previous diagnosis, the research before any intervention would not be just a “census” of needs and resources, but an identification process of the specific reality, of the “valuation” of explicit interests, of demands, and of the needs which are not considered in the sectors or community in which the intervention is going to be developed. Their capacities and potentialities, the existing resources in the place itself, and the barriers and obstacles for the intervention are found.

The specific objective is not just that the animator knows the reality in which they are going to act, but particularly that recipients of the intervention recognise their own reality, be aware of their needs and interests, of their skills and of the difficulties or lacks hindering the changes required.

For this purpose, the analysis, the research, should be intelligible for groups. It is important to analyse the speech that the group have about their own reality conditions. This is a useful analysis for the social creativity in which it is possible to design the type of reality in which is intended to live.

The analysis, research or the previous diagnosis of reality is not an isolated action at the beginning of intervention processes, but a permanent dynamic as the intervention will constantly modify the perception of reality.

The research is therefore an instrument for the social action.

Against other research and analysis models of reality, whose goal is knowing themselves, the goal in this case is to be useful to act upon reality. That is, a self-diagnosis which is itself an action.

### *Planning*

Planning is not just the organisation of the steps required to conduct the intervention: why, what, for what, for whom, how, with whom, with what, when, and where. It is mainly a process to identify priorities, to “appropriate” the objectives on the part of the group or of the community in which the intervention takes place, to define appropriate strategies and tactics required for the capacities and existing resources, to take decisions, to assign responsibilities, and to specify tasks.

The ASC should promote and support this process in the group. The planning is focused on, and here is the peculiar feature, making the planning of the group possible.

Planning is not an isolated moment either: like the diagnosis, it is continuously modified depending on the change of the perception of reality. That is, new objectives are redefined, new resources are achieved, new resistances are found, etc.

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Planning should be for the “success”, so objectives should be possible and reachable for the group, as well as gradual according to each moment of the process.

### **Action**

Actions divided into all possible ways, with all techniques and resources available and appropriate, should be conducted mainly by the group. The ASC should never replace the initiative of the group, but support and guide it.

Actions should be gratifying for those developing them, as well as imaginative, creative and participatory. They should be based on own capacities and resources, as well as on those which could be obtained by their action.

The action is not an isolated moment either, but a constant dynamic of the process. When reality is analysed, action is performed, and when it is planned, action is also performed, and so on.

The group action or practice is the basis of the “theorising” and of the conceptualisation: the group learns by practising, so practice should be conscious and systematised, that is, a permanent purpose to be analysed.

Action is focused on social change and the overcoming of current reality.

### **Assessment**

The assessment is not just nor mainly a quantification of results but the recognition of the process on the part of the group, the realisation of the changes produced in the group and in the change of its specific reality and of the way to achieve them.

The assessment will necessarily modify the perception of reality (the self-perception as a group and its perception of the environment) and will be the starting point of a redefinition of objectives, strategies, and tactics in a continuous process.

The assessment is not an isolated moment, but a permanent dynamic in the process the group and in the intervention process. Assessment takes place to facilitate the assessment of the group. An assessment which is not “appropriate” for the group has no sense.

By way of a summary: practical consequence of the ASC’s methodological vision.

Again, the *Equipo Claves* provides an accurate summary based on fourteen ideas:

1. ASC’s programmes are necessarily considered as medium- and long-term intervention processes. Time, continuity, and stability of the action are required.
2. ASC’s processes require the **stable intervention of qualified agents, with a continuous training and renewal** according to the needs which emerge.
3. ASC’s programmes are formulated based on the **previous knowledge of reality** in which it is intended to intervene. The previous research is not an option, but a condition.

4. Knowledge of reality, the **diagnosis of situations**, needs, and interests affecting the group, the community subject of the intervention; it is **not very effective if it is carried out outside the group itself. That is, without their active participation.**

From the ASC, the group itself should know and realise its situation rather than the intervention agent.

5. The **objectives and the contents of the intervention** should be directly and obviously **related to the reality of the group or community**, including their actual and specific interests and needs.

Group's daily reality should have to be a permanent action referent, a guarantee of its own motivation.

6. The group, the community should **necessarily participate in the definition of the objectives** of the intervention and in the making of the programme. They should appropriate them. **This appropriation is a guarantee of adaptation to their interests and needs.**

7. Objectives should be accurate and reachable **according to the capacities of the group**. Action will be successful only in this way.

8. Human and technical resources, and the materials required for the intervention should be mainly those **existing in the group or which could be obtained with their own effort.**

9. Programmes should be mainly executed **by the group or community**. They should be based on their participation, intervention, and decision-making according to their increasing capacity throughout the process.

10. Projects should **strengthen relational networks**, the mechanisms of articulation and of group organisation. This is the only guarantee of continuity of the programme or project when the agent-promoter disappears.

11. **Intervention methods and techniques** should be **consistent** among them and with the objectives, as well as appropriate for the situation and conditions of the group.

They should also be **group, participatory, and stimulating**. Pleasant and gratifying for the group. Boredom is the quickest way towards the lack of interest.

12. Assessment should be systematic, continuous and participatory. **The group should appropriate successes and the errors made, its own growth and development.**

13. The aim is not just to act upon reality, but to act in a collective and participatory way, **thus building up the organisation.**

14. **The ASC's intervention is not just interested in what is achieved, but also how it is achieved. The means is so or more fundamental than the goal. Objectives and the method used to achieve them are equally important in the sociocultural animation.**

## 5. Approach to the training of sociocultural animators

In the nineties, the **Andalusian public school for sociocultural animation** carried out a research work on the idea,

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characteristics, and features that should be included in the training in the ASC in line with the animation's profile and objectives.

Such research study (by **José Ignacio Artillo** et al.) was carried out in the context of a training programme of Trainers' training in which more than a hundred and fifty sociocultural animators of the Andalusian Autonomous Region took part.

A summary of the coincident opinions of such animators are included below, although they are differently expressed.

I think that such opinions show the most important characteristics of the training of sociocultural animators in most public centres and schools of animation:

### **An inductive training**

An inductive training which favours learning by finding, allows to learn how to look for, and stimulates observation and research.

The methodological process of training should be mainly inductive, that is, it should be based on the experience itself and opt for the collective construction of knowledge.

The experience itself is the starting point, the permanent reference, which is the purpose of the collective reflection.

### **A participatory training**

A participatory training implies that the training group is fully aware of all the stages of the learning process and their progressive intervention, according to the development of their capacities in such process. This fact implies the use of learning methods and techniques based on the active participation of subjects not as resources to "enliven" or to make learning more entertaining, but as a condition required for the process itself.

### **A training in group and for the group**

A training favouring the group as an educational element. A training which favours the building up of the group, is useful for the development of the group awareness, and respects the learning pace of each group.

Group learning favours the development and the exercising of values, habits, and attitudes of communication, cooperation, teamwork, etc., which are required for animator's tasks.

Also, the group is going to be the natural scope of their intervention work.

### **An evolving training**

In the same way that the animator considers their intervention as a medium- and long-term process, training actions are not isolated moments, but elements of a process interrelated among their different elements (objectives, methods, techniques, etc.) in a coherent way.



As the ASC itself, animators' training is a continuous process in relation and permanent alternation with the work practice.

## **A practical training**

Continuing the previous idea, everything learnt should be compared with reality, should be exercised in the experimentation, in the application of everything learnt and in the analysis of the practical experience.

Practices are not a complementary element of learning, but an essential component of it.

Training should be useful and, therefore, applicable to the specific practice.

## **A training linked to reality**

Learning should be based on knowing and analysing participants' identity, the recovery of the experience (remember the inductive model mentioned above).

The permanent link of learning with the reality of subjects, with their circumstances, their actual needs and interests, and their language and cultural codes, is a powerful element of motivation and a guarantee of learning's adaptation and success.

## **A training based on communication**

On mutual knowledge, interaction, and interchange of experiences among the members of the group and between them and the trainer, thus favouring the expression and interpersonal communication in all their ways and languages.

The animators' training should arise and consider questions to imply the reflection and to not provide answers beforehand.

## **A training in team, for the teamwork**

The intervention work in a numerous and varied reality also implies a numerous and varied view, so the animator should not and could not work alone. The permanent support of a team is required, thus reinforcing the group dimension of training, which should allow to learn how to work in group.

## **A training for negotiation**

The animator relates demands, mediates between several spokespeople and between the different members of the group. They are mediators. Therefore, they should learn how to negotiate, to consider, and to use negotiation as a tool for their work.

## **A motivating training**

A motivating training which uses and reinforces the motivation with different, pleasant and playful dynamics and

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techniques supporting the training process.

A training which could be adapted to several situations of the group.

A close, affective training in which learning could be enjoyed and the relational environment is favourable.

### **A reflexive, questioning training**

A reflexive, questioning training which generates reflection and allows to learn to think on oneself. A training which is based on discussion, on questioning; which favours the development of the creative thought.

It is not necessary an “indoctrinating” training. It should be critical and self-critical, and respect all opinions, but without being an aseptic or ambiguous eclecticism.

### **An evaluative training**

An evaluative training which facilitates the awareness and permanent assessment of the training process, and develops a sort of continuous “feedback”, with a systematic contrast of its effects and impacts on students.

### **A comprehensive training**

Which implies a global vision of the animation as an integrationist of several disciplines. Which allows to know and to contrast other experiences and realities.

Which allows to build up a comprehensive and integrating vision of reality.

### **A training under renovation**

which could be updated and renovated; whose contents, methods, and techniques are updated.

### **A rigorous training**

With rigour in its contents and approaches.

Such contents and approaches should be justified.

In sum, a training consistent with the principles of the sociocultural animation mentioned and described throughout this text, so the training process is itself a process of sociocultural animation, and the sociocultural animation is in turn considered as a training process which facilitates an attitude change.

## **For Reflection**

### **Reflection 1: THE SOCIOCULTURAL ANIMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FORMAL EDUCATION**

One of the most difficult and provocative challenges at the same time of the academic and formal training of

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sociocultural animators is how to deal with the junction between dynamism, versatility, flexibility, opening, involvement, and practicality which are inseparable from these agents' task, as well as the requirements of academic training structures. How to combine the fluid of the field of action with the systematicity of training; the reality of a very experiential knowledge, although very disjointed from the requirement of theoretical basis and of conceptual rigour of academic aspects; the essential conceptualisation of interventions with decontextualized inertia of training institutions (Trilla, Jaume. *Animación Sociocultural. Teoría, programas y ámbitos*).

### Reflection 2: FUTURE OF THE SOCIOCULTURAL ANIMATION (1).

From my point of view, the future of the sociocultural animation in our country seems to be outside universities, particularly in the figure of the higher technician of the vocational education and training in sociocultural animation which, among other factors, is the only one containing the name. I think that this technician would be finally the person in charge of maintaining and developing the sociocultural animation in our country. This fact suggests some consequences regarding the development of this methodology of the socio-educational intervention:

1. The sociocultural animation will be more and more considered —in a sense mentioned above— as a cross-sectoral intervention methodology or as a function which some professionals, mainly but not exclusively, of education could develop. In particular, social educators of that sector, but also community psychologists, sociologists, and social workers.
2. As a profession and a methodology of the socio-educational intervention, the sociocultural animation will more and more stress social aspects to the detriment of aspects specifically educational. The initial training of higher technicians in sociocultural animation, which leaves out most educational contents, seems to follow this trend.
3. For the specific interventions of sociocultural animation, the working market is likely to favour the recruitment of higher technicians (VET) rather than of social educators as, although their education level is lower, they are more specialised and cheaper from the economic point of view.
4. As the research on sociocultural animation is not included in universities (the author refers to the fact that there is not a degree programme of the ASC, although it is part of the curriculum vitae of the degree programme in Social Education), it seems to be very committed. The increase and improvement of intervention practices is expected, but a research to go more deeply into them and develop them is not clear (Úcar Martínez, Xavier. *Medio siglo de animación sociocultural en España: balance y perspectiva*).

### Reflection 3: FUTURE OF THE SOCIOCULTURAL ANIMATION (2).

We are interested now in whether proposals, such as that of the sociocultural animation, are still in force in our times, in this Spanish society belonging to the beginning of a new century. If there are reasons, problems, situations, etc. which affect the set of the social community (and not only affecting certain specific or marginal groups) in our environment and justify, here and now, the importance and need of the Sociocultural Animation.

If there is an obsolete and residual methodology, maybe appropriate to certain specific groups of society or if, on the contrary, a community intervention methodology, which is based on the principle of the need of social participation as an improvement and change referent of a society with a democratic system more and more distant from the citizenship, more formal and less integrating and participatory, has still sense.

In short, whether projects, interventions, and methodologies are necessary in these moments to strengthen groups, social networks, and the caring organisation of people of social associations and movements which opt for the structuring of a strong, creative, open and protest territorial community, with initiative. The designation of such projects and interventions' origin is maybe not very important.

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