

Quality of Education apropos of Community Management in nine Educational Establishments (EE) in Medellín: 2010 to 2013*

Calidad educativa, a propósito de la gestión comunitaria en nueve establecimientos educativos de Medellín: 2010 a 2013

Qualidade educacional em relação com a gestão comunitária em nove instituições educativas de Medellín: 2010 a 2013

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Abstract

This research's objective is to acknowledge conceptions of community management, its associated practices, and its impact on academic-pedagogical improvement in participating educational establishments. In this research, we used a qualitative study based on a comprehensive hermeneutic. Nine interviews were conducted with executives and teachers from nine EE, including public and private institutions, in Medellín, who had participated in the Medellín City Award for the Quality of Education. We found their community management focused on their relationship with context, outreach to the community, inter-institutional relationships, monitoring alumni, and risk prevention. As a conclusion, we highlight the EE participating in the awards strengthen their community management through partnerships with other organizations, which reinforces social fabric building and improves their educational management.

Keywords

education; educational assessment; educational policy; educational improvement; secondary education

Palabras clave

educación; evaluación educativa; política educativa; mejora educativa; educación secundaria

Resumen

El objetivo de este trabajo es reconocer las concepciones de la gestión comunitaria, las prácticas asociadas con esta y su impacto en el mejoramiento académico-pedagógico de los establecimientos educativos participantes. En esta investigación se privilegió el estudio cualitativo en perspectiva de una hermenéutica comprensiva. Se hicieron nueve entrevistas a directivos y docentes de nueve establecimientos educativos, incluidos públicos y privados, de Medellín que hubieran participado de los premios Ciudad de Medellín a la Calidad de la Educación. Se encontró que la gestión comunitaria de los establecimientos investigados se centró en su relación con el contexto, la proyección a la comunidad, las relaciones interinstitucionales, el seguimiento a egresados y la prevención del riesgo. A modo de conclusión, se resalta que los establecimientos educativos participantes en los premios fortalecen su gestión comunitaria a través de las alianzas con otras organizaciones, lo que afianza la construcción del tejido social y contribuye a mejorar su gestión educativa.

Resumo

O objetivo deste trabalho é reconhecer as concepções da gestão comunitária, as práticas associadas com esta e seu impacto no aprimoramento acadêmico-pedagógico das instituições educativas participantes. Nesta pesquisa privilegamos o estudo qualitativo em perspectiva de uma hermenéutica compreensiva. Realizamos nove entrevistas a diretivas e professores de nove instituições educativas, públicas e particulares, de Medellín, que participaram dos prêmios Cidade de Medellín à Qualidade da Educação. Encontramos que a gestão comunitária das instituições pesquisadas está centrada em sua relação com o contexto, a projeção à comunidade, as relações interinstitucionais, o seguimento a ex-alunos e a prevenção do risco. Como conclusão, assinalamos que as instituições educativas participantes dos prêmios fortalecem sua gestão comunitária através das alianças com outras organizações, afiançando a construção do tecido social e contribuindo para o aprimoramento de sua gestão educacional.

Palavras-chave

educação; avaliação educacional; política educacional; aprimoramento educacional; educação secundária

Introduction

Since its inception, in 2007, the Medellín City Award for the Quality of Education have sought to acknowledge EE' management: public and private, and their actors (teachers and executives), in pursuit education quality and improvement. Which is why in the municipal agreement 26/2007, the award is described as "a citizen meeting space revolving around education [with the purpose of] acknowledging and emphasizing processes and results in terms of improving the quality of education in official and private institutions in the municipality of Medellín". Also, in the 2014 commitment act, it is noted that "this institutional acknowledgement institutes the quality of education and efforts made as a central aspect of school dynamics and logic" (Secretariat of Education of Medellín et al., 2014, p. 1).

These awards for the quality of education, since their institutionalization, have awarded different acknowledgements in their multiple modalities, which have generated in the participating institutions and their actors, different exercises of reflection, construction, and action that would be relevant to rescue to determine what has happened in the institutions based on their participation in the Medellín City Awards for the Quality of Education. Within the framework of these awards, the Secretariat of Education of Medellín proposed:

Materializing a public-private partnership in which efforts are combined to conduct a research process around the Medellín City Award for the Quality of Education, and its contributions to improving EE through critical analysis, systematization, feedback, and dissemination of their meaningful experiences and school constructions. (Secretariat of Education et al, 2014, p. 2)

Considering, hence, the purpose of the Medellín City Award for the Quality of Education, six researches were carried out, including this study named: "Community management within the framework of 'Teachers for life' from the city of Medellín between the years 2010-2013", conducted by the Education, Childhood, and Foreign Languages research group from the *Universidad Católica Luis Amigó*. This research project's purpose was to inquire into and evaluate the impact and possible issues that the Medellín City Awards have had. Thus, the study aims to acknowledge the conceptions of community management, associated practices, and their impact on the academic-pedagogical improvement of participating EE. Based on the foregoing, the research aimed its objectives at describing the different strategies used by EE regarding community management to strengthen and enrich school management; identifying different scenarios and forms of

communication used to stimulate the educational community's members' participation, and finally; characterizing the proposals regarding awards to quality that account for improvements in the academic field of the establishments subject to the study. Thus, it sought to support guidelines that contribute to strengthening community management consistent with context, insofar as the community plays a decisive role in preparing proposals and in the discussion and definition of priorities in the school environment.

This research provides knowledge about what has been done in the city's public and private EE, its immediate context, the work they have done in the community, and how this work enables improving male and female teachers' pedagogical processes of said institutions, which would result in the strengthening of educational processes to achieve better and higher education quality in the city.

On the other hand, the research's results are a relevant input that would guide the reformulation of educational management projects and the generation of public policies. Thus, they are a tool to optimize programs that seek to improve the conditions of EE and their community environment. In other words, it may serve as a reference framework for educational institutions, the Secretariat of Education of Medellín, public and private entities, and non-governmental organizations to strengthen educational policies, programs, and projects with the purpose of achieving quality education and the city's development.

According to the foregoing, this article focuses on describing the relationship between EE in Medellín and community management. Said management is based on three components: the first one refers to relevance to the context, outreach to the community, and inter-institutional relationships; in the second component, alumni are counted, and, in the third and last one, risk prevention.

Theoretical Benchmarks

Community management.

To begin this conceptualization of community management and its relationship with educational management, it is relevant to first refer to the concept of community, as defined by Avella (2004), "as a set of structural, symbolic, communicational, and physical representations, where individuals interact permanently sharing their narratives. This style assumes the community as the protagonist of knowledge and of the knowledge that emerges from community practices" (pp. 30-31).

The foregoing concept must necessarily lead to the search for new criteria to achieve quality education and boost its management by promoting active community participation, which “must be understood as the progressive construction of autonomy in the educational community’s members in a complex and permanent process that constitutes a means and an end of education” (Sierra, Serna, & Pérez, 2002, p. 21). Community management also guides and lays the basis for designing the construction of the relevant coexistence manual and “agreed upon by the institution’s agents, assessment results, transversal projects, and the institution’s context” (Martínez et al., 2012, p. 20). In this sense, community management “is responsible for the Institution’s relationships with the community, participation, and coexistence” (Ministry of National Education, 2010, p. 157). Hence, educational institutions with the purpose of consolidating, achieving, and seeking quality, must consider that:

Participation processes in the educational community must be progressively qualified, based on enabling the diverse actors that comprise it with new democratic understandings and attitudes that allow simultaneously achieving quality education and the construction of a plural and just society. (Sierra et al., 2002, p. 25)

It is at this point that the suggestions made by the Mayor’s Office of Medellín (2013) gain relevance, by noting that the educational institution, as a social and cultural benchmark of its environment, defines, maintains, and monitors the interrelation with its social and productive environment. Such interrelation materializes in the following three components: context relevance, outreach to the community, and inter-institutional relationships; When referencing this component, according to the Mayor’s Office of Medellín (2014), allusion is made:

[...] to the set of strategies and partnerships established by the EE based on acknowledging the context. The school permanently reviews its relationship and participation in building the social fabric and its actions as the protagonist of local and national development. Also, it seeks to align with public and private entities that offer supplementary services for strengthening students’ competencies and skills and involve the family as a strategic partner. (p. 22)

A second component of community management is monitoring alumni. For the purposes of this research, *alumni* will be understood as construed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (as cited in Barrón, 2013)

[...] the concept of alumni corresponds to that of a graduate. Defines as an alumnus the person who successfully completed all the requirements of an educational program. It indicates that the successful completion of a program implies the student demonstrating the skills and knowledge acquired, whether through a test or a series of tests, or by accumulating the specific number of program credits, in such a way that they can obtain the accreditation of the studies carried out. The graduate must be counted as of the year in which they completed all of the program's requirements. (p. 229)

Therefore, and for the Medellín City Award for the Quality of Education, it is important to consider the alumni because they contribute to the social outreach of the EE.

In this sense, it is important to monitor them to contrast their academic, labor, and social performances with the institutional educational proposal to perform the necessary adjustments in accordance with current society's requirements. While, actively linking them to institutional life. (Mayor's Office of Medellín, 2014, p. 22)

The third and final component present in community management is risk prevention, which "refers to the strategies established and carried out by the educational institution to minimize natural, physical, and psychosocial risks that may affect its own dynamics" (Mayor's Office of Medellín, 2013, p. 28).

To comply with this component, the EE must:

Describe the practices to detect, prevent, and mitigate natural, physical, and psychosocial risks defined by the establishment to implement the School Risk Management Plan; expose cross-sectoral links and their corresponding actions to promote a self-care culture and evidence the educational community's members participation in it. (Mayor's Office of Medellín, 2014, p. 35)

In conclusion, it is possible to assert that an educational institution that seeks to achieve quality would aim at achieving community participation, in other words, community management, based on the relevance of its actions, suitable and inspired by its context, "its outreach to the community and its inter-institutional relationships with the environment nearest to the area of influence. On the other hand, it is interested in monitoring alumni and risk prevention" (Mayor's Office of Medellín, 2012, p. 13).

Once the concept of *community management* and its components has been defined, it is also imperative to understand how this component

joins with that of quality and, to that end, it is also necessary to focus a little on the concept of quality of education.

Conceptualization of quality of education.

At this point, it is possible to assert that the concept of *quality of education* may be studied, as stated by Vasquez (2013), from three approaches: traditional, modern, and dialectic. The traditional approach "... refers to the essentialist conception where the entity or quality process has intrinsically developed its features" (p. 64). A second definition is inspired by the relationship between resources, processes, and ends. According to this author's arguments, this type of quality of education is more related to effectiveness and efficiency in processes and means to achieve previously established goals. Here, a quality program would be one that has the necessary resources and that also uses them efficiently and effectively in educational processes. Finally, the concept of *quality*, from a dialectical perspective, refers to: "1) transforming a good or service; 2) criticizing knowledge and develop, innovate, and create knowledge; 3) critically interacting with their students; 4) educational rationality based on historicity; 5) students must be self-taught, researchers, critical, creative, and innovators" (Vásquez, 2013, p. 64).

It is important to clarify that the explanation of quality of education is not only limited to these three characteristics, in other words, they do not adequately explain the concept studied herein. It is therefore necessary to include other factors to which not only the institutions' managers are committed, but rather other actors must be added, such as teachers.

On the other hand, and within the framework of education, Mortinore (as cited by Palma, 2008), states:

A quality school is one that promotes students' progress in a wide range of intellectual, social, moral, and emotional achievements, considering their socioeconomic status, family environment, and previous learning. An effective school system maximizes schools' capacities to achieve these results. Which presupposes adopting the notion of added value in school effectiveness. (pp. 3-4)

In this sense, it is possible to argue that "the quality of education is understood in a multidimensional and contextual manner. Beyond the rates of enrollment, retention, and academic achievement [...] the multi-determined and dynamic nature of quality must be understood" (Rodríguez, 2010, p. 18).

As argued above, there are many connotations of the concept of quality of education; however, it is relevant to indicate that, for the purposes of this research, we take a definition of quality of education that can be explained and is oriented toward the comprehensive development of the human being. A useful perspective in this regard is that of Ramirez and Salinas (as cited by Jaramillo, 1999):

Quality education should foster solidarity, a sense of justice, tolerance, respect for others, improvement habits and personal improvement, and the development of a reasonable emotional and mental balance. In addition, an education with capacity, through the curriculum of valuing and making the way of thinking and feeling, which a community has to face and make sense of everyday life, their own. (p. 97)

It is possible to conclude, then, that quality of education is a continuous process of perfecting and improving educational institutions, which seek, as an ultimate goal, “to efficiently respond to individuals’ needs, while understanding that it must undertake the school’s, community’s, and society’s collective needs” (Jaramillo, 1999, p. 97).

Methodology

We preferred a qualitative research for this study based on a comprehensive hermeneutic approach. This method allows us to understand the experience of the educational institutions (public and private) in the running, nominated, and winners of Medellín City Award for the Quality of Education.

Within the framework of this methodology, the *in-depth interview* was the preferred instrument used to collect information. This technique facilitated the spontaneous expression of individual and group experiences, which provided sufficient information on the proposed topic in the research. To apply the interviews, teachers and teaching executives from the educational institutions participating in the Medellín City Award for the Quality of Education during 2010 and 2013 were invited. They were chosen considering several criteria among which were being participants from in the running, shortlisted, and winners categories. On the other hand, it was important to choose the population from all locations throughout the city and that the different educational centers were represented. In addition, gender equality was considered, in other words, male and female participation in the awards.

Regarding the establishments that participated in the research, it is possible to assert that 9 public and private institutions complying with

the following criteria were chosen: 3 institutions in the running but that were not nominated; 3 institutions that were nominated; and 3 winners in any of its versions. These institutions had to be participating in the awards during 2010 and 2013.

Findings and Discussion

Concepts about community management.

Regarding the concept of *community management* gathered in interviews with executives and teachers, it is possible to assert that, although this is not clearly expressed in the testimonies, some data evidence how this component is managed in different EE and from which, it is possible to deduce the conception of the interviewees in this regard.

To begin this section, one of the participants presents a testimony offering a concept of community management in accordance with a process in which the EE do not limit themselves to only assessing or describing community problems. It is also relevant that management integrates activities that aid in and pursue members' human development. Thus is evidenced by the following argument of one of the participants:

The community has been affected because although we took our students to pedagogical practices in different institutions, now, we are not only linking those other institutions with assistance, with recreation, but also with these research projects. Now, they are participants because they are monitoring this research proposal and training leaders based on it. (Interview 3, personal communication, 2015)

In this section, it is possible to see that the conception of community management is related to providing pedagogical, recreational, and research alternatives together with other institutions to enhance the competencies of community members, which in this case is training leaders who will subsequently have the task of formulating joint alternatives to solve issues.

Thus, it necessary to identify

Community management as an educational process where the driving agent is not only dedicated to identifying, assessing, and making recommendations for problem solving, but also leads, through educational actions, the community to organize itself, define needs, formulate plans, and execute activities leading it to continuously increase its living standard. (Chachagüí Educational Institution, n.d., para. 1)

As it is possible to evidence, the conception of the interviewees about community management is not far from the previous argument, insofar as in their testimonies it is possible to identify an important involvement of the EE with solving actual issues experienced by the community they are a part of.

Hence, we have even generated some employment possibilities, and on the other hand, with the partnerships, the topic of the excellence award won by the Montessori school last year is has little to do with us because we have an agreement with that school, where they work with parents, teachers, and children, assisting a project called PAS, so you can see how these strategies and agreements continue making these communities where we work visible, in addition to the school being the community as such. (Interview 11, personal communication, 2015)

According to the previous testimony, community management is related to implementing activities that improve the quality of life in the environment in which the institution participates. Therefore, “it requires the full participation of the school in collective affairs, the only way to socialize a child through the management of actual issues, and on the other hand, to vitalize school action, awakening and promoting a concrete protection toward it” (Jiménez, 1997, p. 34).

Another concept of community management that is identified in the testimonies is the one related to what Mamani and Machicado (2012) assert:

Based on community educational management, the relationship of the educational institution with the community or society must contribute with ideas for joint projects aimed at improving the quality of life, as well as the progress of the educational community toward inclusion, participation, harmonious coexistence, and projection into the future. (para. 11)

The testimony that recreates and substantiates what was said above, is the one expressed in Interview 7 (personal communication, 2015):

The institution is busy all the time, older persons, youth group, dance group. This year, a group of music and arts we have uses certain classrooms at night. The environmental program, we have identified retirement homes, places where to plant trees, we have Saturdays with adults from the community aimed at adults over 18 years old, whether their children go here or not. The program is aimed at teaching English, a program to reflect on the environment and information technology for adults.

What is relevant about these experiences is that the different testimonies evidence some meanings of community management, considering what the Mayor's Office of Medellín (2014) asserts, that the city's EE demonstrate a broad commitment to their community and are responsible for improving their environment undertaking a commitment with their community and deploying their educational, training, and pedagogical proposals to support the development of others (community), without abandoning the rigorousness that must characterize their existence and without falling into the artifice of taking responsibility for or being held responsible for the crisis or the solution.

Context relevance, outreach to the community, and inter-institutional relationships.

Regarding relevance to the context, it is demonstrated in the data found that there is an important relevance of the institution, in relation to the context that is explained in the habitability of the students near the institution, one of the interviews notes:

“Calasanz for all is an activity where the school provides tutoring to children from here from the community 13 [...] The community action board comes and talks to us, the possibility is studied and if it is feasible, it is done, it is more like the willingness to assist them in the event it is not feasible” (Interview 1, personal communication, 2015).

This component is supplemented by the following testimony:

[...] the school has been characterized as a neighborhood school, you come here on a Saturday or a Sunday and there are more people, there are more people on Saturdays and Sundays than from Monday to Friday because here, they all take courses, they lend it out for everything the community needs, there are many *catecumenos* and here, they hold all their meetings, since they hold all their events here. (Interview 9, personal communication, 2015)

In Interview 11 (personal communication, 2015), this component of community management can also be viewed and how the institution strengthens its belonging to the context with the strategy of considering their needs and requirements, “[...] the strategies to access the community and we mentioned the centers of interest, then we invite the community, but with things that are actually useful to them based on their needs [...]”.

As evidenced, to strengthen its relevance to the context, the EE has the ability to read the situations and needs of its environment to propose

based on them, different alternatives that solve their difficulties, therefore, the EE have the ability of

explaining how, the offering of supplementary training projects, the use of the library, computer resources, and other institutional spaces and the development of artistic, cultural, sports, academic activities, are used by the sector's community as a space to share, supplement knowledge and experiences that nourish the institutional educational project. (Mayor's Office of Medellín, 2013, p. 27)

An initial testimony that describes this EE resource is the following:

"Calasanz for All is an activity where the school provides tutoring to children from here from the community 13 [...] the great contribution of community management is on the one hand, that it strengthens family structures, in everything we were saying just now, healthy lifestyles [...]" (Interviewee 1, personal communication, 2015).

In this same sense, it is noted that the "we have the social outreach in the *Granizal* rural subdivision, *Altos de Oriente* sector. We were going to bring them food on Saturdays with the parents and female students of Calasanz, and with the girls from Colegio León XIII" (Interview 2, personal communication, 2015).

Other EE in the city, used as a strategy to outreach to the community, the partnership with other institutions, the following testimony evidences this alternative:

[...] it is a research topic or a proposal from *Explora* or *Proantioquia* and we always participate, we always apply, we always want to show what we do. Yes, Yamaha said, your project, come friend, it is very good there, so they have been working with us, then we were assigned a teacher, and we have been growing with Yamaha. (Interview 6, personal communication, 2015)

The different forms of community management also involve combining theory with practice.

The alternating model is a French model, which comes to give us some guides, some insight into how you can alternate the theoretical with the practical, but it is something that is constantly done in the *Normal*, since it constantly takes center stage, the theory with the practice is done at all times. Here, we gave it a greater focus because they are women with many personal problems and lack training in self-esteem, so first, we had to do a strengthening job and the study gives them the possibility of making greater progress and valuing themselves, more regarding what they do. (Interview 4, personal communication, 2015)

In Interview 7 (personal communication, 2015), we found that community outreach activities also welcome people over 18 years old from outside the educational community. Thus, says the testimony: “We have Saturdays with adults from the community over 18 years old, whether their children go here or not, the program is aimed at teaching English, reflection on the environment and information technology” (Interview 7, personal communication, 2015).

The main finding related to inter-institutional relationships is the ability the EE have to build partnerships with other institutions. It is also noteworthy to mention that the number of partnerships managed by each institution is high, on average 4.8 partnerships per EE ; the most proactive institution in this regard has 12 partnerships. An example of this situation was found in Interview 2 (personal communication, 2015):

Building social fabric not only occurs from external institutions (Institute of Sports and Recreation of Medellín [Inder] and the University of Cambridge), but also from these toward the community, as evidenced through the Scouts, from the Calazans for all project (teaching the population from the community 13), social work provided to the different institutions (geriatric centers, healthcare centers, libraries, among others) that finally manage to establish agreements and generate the sufficient support required by the community and that the academic community is able to generate.

The previous experience is supplemented by one of the interviewees, who says: “In social work, agreements are made with nearby educational institutions, they can be geriatric homes, they can be kindergartens, they can be hospitals” (Interview 1, personal communication, 2015).

In other EE, the most relevant partnerships and relationships are established with the community. A testimony describing this type of experience is as follows:

Social relevance in said educational institution, becomes relevant since the community directly interacts with the school, based on history, the community created the school for the good of all and this makes teachers, students, parents, and executives speak a common language. Social fabric addresses the needs of both the school and the community, thus intertwining everyone’s well-being with cultural and sports activities; thus, the relationship with the community action boards, churches, health and traffic secretariats, Inder and other programs make it efficient and deliver good results. (Interview 5, personal communication, 2015)

The community, hence, becomes one of the main partners of EE to carry out its proposals and projects, which serves as a support for the development of different activities.

Although the immediate environment becomes a strategic partner for the EE, the latter also resort to partnerships with international institutions. The following experience supports the previous argument:

The community, in general, allowed changes, and the EE, thinking about the context, undertook the task of growing competently, leading students to remain in the academy by participating in educational projects and events such as: *Pentacidad*, which allowed teaching values inside and outside of the school, since the institution became a network, for example, for other neighboring schools that aid the entire community. (Interview 5, personal communication, 2015)

It is noteworthy to mention among the most important partnerships made by public and private establishments, those made with international higher education institutions. "The institution stands out for its international [...] partnerships, such as the one [built] with FS Barcelona [...] the University of Texas" (Interview 1, personal communication, 2015).

In addition, partnerships with different local universities stand out. In this sense, it is said in Interview 4 (personal communication, 2015):

With Eafit, currently the training of women is under an agreement with Eafit and the [...], another of the agreements with San Buenaventura, we have an agreement with Universidad de Antioquia, ah! and well-being, we also have the part of the doctors who come and intervene with the men who are gynecologists [...].

Among the different partnerships, there are also those made with government entities: "We have partnerships with the Women's Secretariat, with the municipality of *Sabaneta*, with the municipality of *Necoclí*, with the *Doradal* district in *Puerto Triunfo*" (Interview 11, personal communication, 2015). In Interview 10 (personal communication, 2015), it is expressed in this regard: "Today we are with the Secretariat of Education and with the Vice Mayor of Education and Culture planning the T-Shirts day for the whole city".

In summary, it is possible to assert that the majority of partnerships were established at the local level, although there are some institutions that operate in several countries such as Terpel, Yamaha, Sisco, and the Red Cross, they were with local subsidiaries with whom the EE made contact. Only one has established international relationships, specifically with FS España, FBC, Imagine, and the University of Texas; in addition, one of its

offices is the result of international cooperation with organizations in Puerto Rico. The institution with which the most partnerships are established is with the Women's Secretariat.

Alumni.

Although the category speaks of the importance of graduates since they contribute to the social outreach of the EE. It is essential to monitor the role they have in the context, according to this, the EE of the sample have established some parameters to be able to comply with said requirement, but it is still the institutions' breaking point since collecting and monitoring the information is complicated.

However, despite the lack of information in this regard and the few activities carried out in the research, it is possible to evidence that the little work done by the institutions with the alumni consists of keeping information related to graduates' access to higher education institutions, alumni reunions, sports days, and Eucharists. On the other hand, some EE manifest they have achieved a high sense of belonging among their alumni, to the point that several of them work with the institution's students. The above is evidenced in the following testimony:

Here? A beauty, do you know what the *Universidad de Antioquia* does? It comes every Sunday, for the students here who are having problems with mathematics [...]. So, he comes and explains to them. Not anyone does that and free of charge [...]. (Interview 7, personal communication, 2015)

Also, the interviewee says:

"We have some alumni from here, from the institution, who advise us because they work in banks, and they come here to give us the advice we need to apply for loans, all of that [...] And the little girl who is studying preschool education, is already doing her internship here, spectacular. So, the students themselves have that because they have been taught that, gratitude" (Interview 7, personal communication, 2015).

In this same sense, it is manifested:

The sense of belonging is high and there are many alumni who currently, because of their positions, their jobs, their companies, engaging them with the institution greatly improves the dynamics of the school itself, in approaching projects, funding possibilities, possibilities of improving their work of social outreach and it is a potential that we

have taken 100%. advantage of. (Interview 2, personal communication, 2015)

In the small amount of information found in the EE related to alumni, institutions that have an innovative practice in working with them stand out, which consists of training and certifying their competencies.

Regarding training, we have three moments per year: one is that they are invited together with a person from [Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje] SENA to certify their competencies, that is essential and it is very difficult because of all of our alumni, only 15 have certified competencies and it is a great achievement that they can be certified based on the technique they did. (Interview 4, personal communication, 2015)

And they add that in training, they have the annual cinema forum with their interest and their participation is welcomed; there is a training meeting and fundamentally, we frame it within the subject of competency certification or show them which is the city's current employment route; they are informed where the job banks are located; where they can take their curriculum vitae, and they are told how to fill them out.

Regarding the strategy to keep alumni informed, the interviewee says:

There is plenty of contact, the response is a different story, sometimes it is good, sometimes it is not, it depends on many factors, but usually there is a very good relationship with the alumni, they frequently come by requesting to use the internet lab and on Facebook, there is a person who is the cultural driver, who is in responsible for setting up the school events and they are continuously there. (Interview 4, personal communication, 2015)

According to the data provided by the interviews, it is possible to conclude that there is very little work with the alumni group. It is possible to evidence that there are several institutions that do not have any type of program targeting this population.

Risk prevention.

The results from the interviews show that there are multiple activities carried out, the foregoing linked to the own needs of each EE and the context in which they are located, in accordance with their vision and mission.

The first of these activities emphasizes its work in preventing psychosocial risk, developing manual activities and sports. Thus, is made known by the following testimony:

The institution has intervention spaces in art and sports, where community participation is achieved and thus prevent students from entering segregated and unfavorable contexts since drug addiction and consumption of psychoactive substances [...]. (Interview 2, personal communication, 2015)

This strategy is supplemented by the activities carried out with the teachers themselves:

It is also important to work risk prevention with teachers since they are the ones who provide an institution's learning and stability, thus, they are invited to the games and a gym is being equipped for them [...]. (Interview 2, personal communication, 2015).

In other circumstances, executives and teachers opt for more spiritual and verbal expression activities. For more clarity on this matter, one of the participants says:

The annual retreats carried out to share with students bring with them other links and actions, since, according to the continuous dialogue with them, the issue is intervened whether with the family, the school, or the context. (Interview 6, personal communication, 2015)

Another important data found during this study is the fact that there are several activities that are integrated to try to prevent not only psychosocial risk, but also students' physical risk. The following interview expresses:

Coexistence workshops are held in the classroom, the cafeteria that only allows healthy food choices. The sexuality project is also done, which not only involves students, but also parents, the well-being project that is carried out internally, in addition to *abra palabra*, which is the reading project. Regarding disaster prevention, we are currently working from the area of natural sciences, where the evacuation route is adjusted and known. (Interview 8, personal communication, 2015)

As a supplement to the previous activities, some EE use instruments to keep the information updated for students that may be in any type of psychosocial risk and for that reason, they use a file to keep student information:

[...] There is the FARDA (Student-Teacher Relationship Data Sheet), which is built over time and the relationships with them, so that there is information about the context: where the student comes from, adaptability to the educational institution, their growth, strengths, or academic processes, in addition to the psychological portion. (Interview 4, personal communication, 2015)

The previous strategies would not be substantiated or feasible without a prior guideline or legal framework to support them. That is why several institutions find in the legislation an adequate guide to carry out their risk prevention activities, as found in Interview 3 (personal communication, 2015), which through their representative, asserts: "Law 1620 is used, which positions them in the care route, whether with their parents or guardians, based on that, what is needed is done from the EE, and also with *Cerca*, which the community uses".

Community management and its contribution to ee' pedagogical academic improvement.

Now, the question arises: how does community management contribute to EE' pedagogical academic improvement in the city of Medellin to increase their quality of education?

A first response is based on taking positive experiences from the community itself and implementing them in the EE. One of the interviewees says:

We were the first institution that talked about student managers, we were the first to talk about mediators, the first in the city; why? Because I came from doing social work in the Belén sector. I found the work I did within the communities could be done within the institutions. So we started to create school coexistence managers [...] (Interview 10, personal communication, 2015)

Another answer emerges from the partnerships that the EE make with other entities. An example is presented by Interviewee 6 (personal communication, 2015): "Yes, Yamaha said, your project, come friend, it is very good there, so they have been working with us, then they assigned a teacher, and we have been growing with Yamaha."

On the other hand, these partnerships have led to building joint projects. As said by one of the participants:

With the boards, with the Women's Secretariat, when making agreements with the community boards, who are the ones presenting the proposals and is the resource of PB, (Participatory budget) , adjacent of course to the whole nucleus because all the surrounding schools have something in common with the *Escuela Normal*, most of them are alumni from here, are here, and we have direct contact at all times. (Interview 4, personal communication, 2015).

Also, strengthening and relevance to the context have favored the improvement of the EE' pedagogical academic processes, in this case, coexistence. Regarding this, they say:

"It is very strange that students live in an environment farther away from school, so that means that there is an identification of the social environment and the exercise of coexistence that we want to facilitate and provide at the school [...]" (Interview 1, personal communication, 2015).

Partnerships with universities have also enriched the pedagogical processes, this subject is discussed in Interview 4 (personal communication, 2015), referring to the pedagogical achievements contributed by *Universidad de Antioquia*:

They also complete a beautiful intervention here with the project of the Universidad de Antioquia, because the pedagogical part intervenes with students from the university with students from the university program and also with medical doctors, that is another one of the projects that are here.

In this same sense, cooperation agreements and activities with other entities, in this case with international entities, have also achieved in having an impact on the pedagogical processes of the city's EE. In this regard, it is noted:

This international agreement not only allowed learning a new pedagogical model, but also a transformation of the community, in which not only students, but parents and teachers are involved, inviting them to grow in competencies, namely, doing and knowing. (Interview 5, personal communication, 2015).

Thus, it is evidenced that the management the EE carry out with the community, the environment, and society, has contributed ideas, projects, strategies for coexistence, and alternatives for continuous improvement of the pedagogical academic processes that are "aimed at improving the quality of life, as well as the educational community's progress toward inclusion, participation, harmonious coexistence, and projection into the future" (Mamani & Machicado, 2012, para. 11).

Conclusions

At this point, we can end by saying that the conception of community management that the studied institutions have is broad and defined by each of the contexts. Its implementation is guided and motivated by the

particular needs of each of the communities which they are a part of. These conceptions, as a whole, make it possible to understand and construe this concept differently, insofar as they are related and constructed according to the own experiences of the EE and of its participants. Regarding the practices associated with community management, it is possible to conclude that the institutions have good strategies to read the environment and reinforce the relevance to the context, they are also able to capitalize on said reading and based on that, propose outreach activities that have the purpose of building and rehabilitating the social fabric. Thus, it is possible to assert that the sense of belonging is high.

Taking the case of the alumni, it is possible to conclude that there is very little work done with them: there are several institutions that do not have any type of program targeting this population. The strategy the institutions use the most to know how they are consists of keeping information on their access to higher education and university enrollment, alumni reunions by means of sports days and Eucharists. Other institutions present innovative practices in working with alumni: since the population they serve is of a low-income and have issues entering the work life, they are shown portals and job offers in the city, they are given information that improves their opportunities, their competencies are certified; they are informed where the job banks are located, they are told how to make curriculum vitae, and where they can take them. There are many activities carried out for alumni in the EE, which generate in them a high sense of belonging to their institution. Thus, educational institutions continue to have the contribution of the alumni in the management of educational processes, which helps to improve the quality of education.

It is essential, then, to strengthen the process of monitoring alumni and their role in the context, since, although the sample EE have shown that they have strategies to responsibly comply with the monitoring process, we must clearly note that it continues to be the breaking point of the EE, since collecting the information and constantly monitoring it is complicated.

Regarding the inter-institutional relationships of the city's EE, it is possible to highlight the ability they have to build partnerships with different institutions. The partnerships that were established with institutions in the local context stand out, but only one of the institutions have established international relationships, specifically with FS España, FBC, Imagine, and the University of Texas; in addition, one of its offices is the result of international cooperation with organizations in Puerto Rico.

Finally, and in relation to the impact that community management has had on the academic-pedagogical improvement of the EE, we end by saying that based on the knowledge of other successful experiences, in the

same type of contexts, educational institutions can adapt experiences and apply them, insofar as it helps them realize what is happening with education in other institutions that are in the process of improving their quality, these can become a motivating and very important factor for teachers and executives, who also want to achieve a better quality in difficult contexts. Community management allowed the EE to realize that they had to further strengthen leadership. On the other hand, it motivated many institutions to change their pedagogical models: allowing them to put participation into practice, let them know that it was necessary to modify the coexistence manual, which improvements they had to make based on the Institutional Educational Project (PEI), as an instrument of dialogue, agreement, prevention, and as a tool built based on the principles, needs, and actions of each establishment.

So, community management allowed the EE to learn how to solve their own coexistence issues based on the responses to these issues offered by other institutions with which they have established partnerships. On the other hand, it has allowed them to learn about processes that some institutions perform in their day-to-day to solve social and economic issues, processes and activities that were not believed possible. Community management became a source of educational methodologies, projects, and models that could be tested with the aim of adapting the EE to their communities.

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