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*Translated from the original in spanish*

**Original article**

## **The educational perspective in community recreation**

### **La perspectiva educativa en la recreación comunitaria**

### **A perspectiva educacional na recreação comunitária**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The human being is a biopsychosocial and historical unit; as a social actor he is capable of reflecting and reproducing in his thinking and consciousness the surrounding reality of which he is a part, as well as exercising in it a transforming action called praxis. This is based as a problem on the lack of preparation of teachers in determining the contents of Physical recreation according to the real characteristics of the community context and to the objective and subjective historical conditions determined. The purpose of the article is to explain the link that education and its incidence have on the Physical recreation teacher, which has as a fundamental objective to solve the existing limitations in the program of the sport complex, from the content that is implemented, and to

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articulate the vertical and horizontal invariants, presented in the physical-recreational activities towards the community. The methodology consisted of an analysis of the teacher's way of acting in order to plan the activities in practice according to the integrating project of the combined sport complexes. The analysis showed insufficiencies in the selection of content as a dynamic tool within the community context to create a recreational and educational culture in free time. This had an impact on the improvement of the researched variable in 95% of the sample and was evaluated as very adequate. Based on this pre-experiment, it was concluded that the lack of preparation of the teacher affects the determination of the content of Physical recreation to generate alternatives in an educational way towards a correct constructive use of the community's free time.

**Keywords:** Physical recreation; Educational content; Physical-recreational activities; Community context.

## RESUMEN

El ser humano es una unidad biopsicosocial e histórica; como actor social es capaz de reflejar y reproducir en su pensamiento y conciencia la realidad circundante donde él mismo forma parte, así como ejercer en ella una acción transformadora llamada praxis. Esta se basa como problema en la falta de preparación de los profesores en cuanto a determinar los contenidos de la Recreación Física de acuerdo con las características reales del contexto comunitario y a las condiciones objetivas y subjetivas históricas determinadas. El propósito del artículo está en explicar el vínculo que tiene la educación y su incidencia en el profesor de Recreación Física, la cual tiene como objetivo fundamental resolver las limitaciones existentes en el programa de los combinados deportivos, a partir del contenido que se implemente, y articular las invariantes tanto vertical como horizontal, presentadas en las actividades físico-recreativas hacia la comunidad. La metodología consistió en un análisis del modo de actuación del profesor para planear en la práctica las actividades de acuerdo con el proyecto integrador de los combinados deportivos. El análisis demostró insuficiencias en la selección del contenido como herramienta dinamizadora dentro del contexto comunitario para conformar una cultura recreativa y educativa en el tiempo libre. Eso repercutió en el mejoramiento de la variable investigada en el 95 % de la muestra y se evaluó de muy adecuado. Basado en ese pre experimento, se concluyó que la falta de preparación del profesor incide en la determinación del contenido de la Recreación Física para generar alternativas de forma educativa hacia una correcta utilización constructiva del tiempo libre de la comunidad.

**Palabras clave:** Recreación física; Contenido educativo; Actividades físico-recreativas; Contexto comunitario.

## RESUMO

O ser humano é uma unidade bio-psico-social e histórica; como ator social é capaz de refletir e reproduzir no seu pensamento e consciência a realidade envolvente da qual faz parte, bem como de exercer nela uma ação transformadora chamada práxis. Isto baseia-se como um obstáculo na falta de preparação dos professores para determinar os conteúdos da Recreação Física de acordo com as características reais do contexto comunitário e as condições históricas objetivas e subjetivas determinadas. O objectivo consistia em resolver algumas das limitações existentes no Programa de Recreação Física, relacionadas com o conteúdo das atividades físico-recreativas como forma de



educação para a comunidade, de acordo com as atuais mudanças nas indicações e de acordo com o carácter intencional, sistemático e orientado nesse sentido. A metodologia consistiu numa análise da forma de atuação do professor a fim de planejar as atividades na prática de acordo com o projecto de integração dos desportos combinados. A análise mostrou insuficiências na seleção do conteúdo como instrumento dinamizador dentro do contexto comunitário para formar uma cultura recreativa e educativa em tempo livre. Isto teve um impacto na melhoria da variável investigada em 95% da amostra e foi avaliado como muito adequado. Com base neste pré-experimento, concluiu-se que a falta de preparação do professor afecta a determinação do conteúdo da Recreação Física para gerar alternativas de uma forma educativa para uma correta utilização construtiva do tempo livre da comunidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Recreação física; conteúdo educativo; atividades físico-recreativas; contexto comunitário.

## INTRODUCTION

The human being is a bio-psycho-social and historical unit; as a social actor he is capable of reflecting and reproducing in his thought and conscience the surrounding reality of which he is a part, as well as exercising in it a transforming action called praxis. This is based, as a problem, on the lack of preparation of teachers in determining the contents of Physical recreation according to the real characteristics of the community context and to the objective and subjective historical conditions determined.

This social historical reality in Physical recreation is expressed in its social object and aspirations of the social actors, through the physical-recreational activities, according to the normative guiding documents of the **National program (2017)**, as well as the ways of satisfying or manifesting them. In such a process, in addition to the relationships established in it, communities occupy a social position where it marks economic differences, role distinctions, preparation tasks and decision making at a macro-social level to get to establish Recreation for them.

Therefore, Physical recreation within the community context, according to **Casal, N. (2000); Ramos, A.; et al., (2010); Pérez, A. (2013)** possesses great importance by being designated as a social, psychological and cultural need by fulfilling certain recreational characteristics such as a type of participation, a content, a part of free time, being chosen by the subject with a scientific, artistic and educational orientation. These characteristics are fundamental contributions for society as a whole, where the social actor himself achieves modifications in his way of acting, thinking, feeling, being a psychosocial phenomenon from the values, principles and give a humanistic perspective; they are essential in the preparation for life, by overcoming personal problems in achieving benefits, identifying with each other and the environment by its changing and dynamic nature.

Other authors such as **González, A. (2013); Rodríguez O. & Zavarce E. (2014); Lema, R. & Machado, M.C. (2015)** agree that physical recreation is elective and participatory in full coordination with educational action, as they are self-motivated and pleasurable activities. At the same time, they refer that, seen from the social point of view, it is a transgressor of borders; it should be in all communities, in all places where it is possible for it to be put into practice during leisure time.



Regarding those practices from the social point of view according to its benefits, some researchers of the subject such as Sallis, J. F. (2009); Fenton, M. (2012); Jilcott, S. *et al.*, (2013); Adams, M. A. *et al.*, (2015); Fernández, Y. *et al.*, (2016) agree that physical-recreational activities should be well organized and oriented, from the educational point of view, to contribute to preserve the natural environment, reduce work stress and pollution of sounds typical of cities, promote physical and mental health, rehabilitation of physical and mental diseases and be effective in combating obesity and sedentary lifestyles, aspects that justify the proposal of activities that promote education in the social actors of the community.

In this direction, the purpose of the article is to explain the link between education and its impact on the Physical recreation teacher, whose main objective is to solve the existing limitations in the sports complexes program, based on the content that is implemented, and to articulate the vertical and horizontal invariants, presented in the physical-recreational activities towards the community.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study presented corresponded to a master's and doctoral research, directed by the authors of this article, at the Faculty of Physical Culture of Santiago de Cuba. Preliminary elements were included, based on the theoretical and methodological assumptions of Physical recreation, embodied from 2003 to 2017, according to studies on the subject in Cuba.

The research was developed in the "José Martí" District of the Santiago de Cuba municipality, with full participation of the Physical Culture Faculty. A sample of 42 teachers of Physical recreation from "Alejandro Urgellés" sports complex was taken. Ten directors, nine methodologists of the municipal Department of Recreation, in addition to the 12 delegates of the "Mariana Grajales" Popular Council were included.

In order to find a solution to the problems that arise in the communities, a series of factors that intervene in the sports complex- community relationship were analyzed. This relationship has the social actor at its center as an active, transforming and creative being; it presupposes considering the environment in all its dimensions as a starting point for creation and as a premise of freedom. From this point of view, human existence acquires a great value in the community, in which the social actor must be considered as the center and not a mere means to a particular end.

On the other hand, the community is the political and ideological center of every social being that never remains static, it evolves in a spiral form and goes from a lower to a higher form as it is the most interested in improving the quality of life of its inhabitants, according to customs, traditions and interests.

In this sense, sports complexes play a fundamental role as a methodological regulator to form values in the community and its inhabitants, in their approach to the determination and knowledge of the problems that affect their environment and how to act and intervene in their solution.

For this research, the following indicators were taken into account:

1. The preparation of the Physical recreation teacher in the sport complexes.



2. The behavior of the normative documents that govern the program towards the communities.

Based on these indicators, a diagnosis was made to assess the external and internal factors of the community context that condition the fulfillment of the objectives and actions planned in each activity according to the content to be implemented.

The purpose of the external and internal assessment of the factors was to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities associated with the adequacy of the planned actions in order to foresee changes and achieve the objectives. These factors will have a special incidence on the preparation of the teacher and the social actors involved in the process and are specified as follows:

- Availability for the interaction of the community social actors involved with the actions planned in each physical-recreational activity.
- Effectiveness of the local mass media to develop educational actions in favor of an integral general culture.

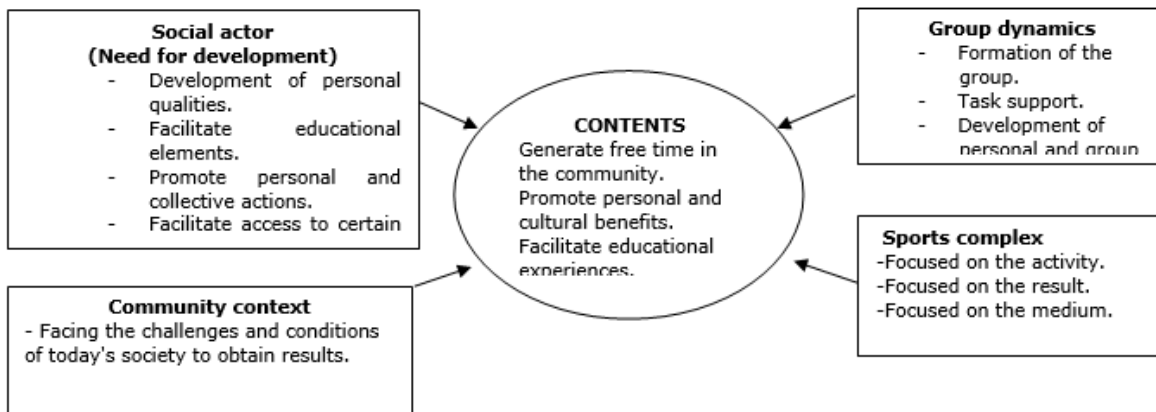
For its realization, empirical methods and techniques were used, such as bibliographic and documentary review, interviews, surveys and participant observation of the social actors and other subjects involved in the process; all in correspondence with the teacher's way of acting to plan in practice the activities to be implemented in the community context.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Physical-recreational activities offer unforeseen results that can, in one way or another, influence the way of planning Physical recreation in the community context, with the objective of generating alternatives for a constructive use of free time and, in this way, integrate the formal and non-formal areas of education, in a free time education that enhances the participation of the community.

These alternatives depend, to a great extent, on the development needs of the social actors, the dynamics of the group in which the intervention takes place, the community context in which Recreation takes place and the sport complex as the main institution, where a great amount of contents to be considered in the Physical recreation program arise and, at the same time, difficult for the teacher to outline in the objectives. Even so, the contents should be configured on the practice itself (Figure 1).





**Fig. 1.** - Determinations in the selection of contents

This selection of content for Physical recreation teachers must fulfill three tasks:

1. Facilitate the creation of recreational situations.
2. To work so that physical-recreational activities are beneficial.
3. To turn it into an educational experience.

That is to say, the teacher must influence the education of the social actors' free time to ensure the creation of recreational situations. This implies teaching the organization and use of that time, without altering personal autonomy in the management of their own use and that the orientation allows the actors to act freely to experience pleasure, satisfaction through rest, fun and development.

In addition, the idea of physical-recreational activities should be a moment of development, these educational experiences of reality should be a retro-projective experience of personal and collective transformation and as a reference in Physical recreation can be structured from three large blocks of content: free time, benefits and experience of the social actors.

At the same time, it must be generated, beyond the available space, in an authentic education of that free time; for this, it must begin by facilitating situations of activities that ensure a good use of it. Then, to ensure the greatest amount of personal and cultural benefits as a way to consolidate the time as a positive experience. Also, seek the ethical content necessary for the benefits to facilitate an educational experience in the community.

Finally, it should be taken into account in each teacher, in the sport complexes, the decisive and important role where it reforms his work, with a more comprehensive approach in his educational approach and is a high demand to the community, the observance of the norms of socialist morality and the collective and individual responsibilities of social actors for society.

The existence of limitations in the Physical recreation activities is due, in its essence, to the lack of preparation of the teachers in the sport complexes; but these activities, as a theoretical foundation, are considered as a basic need for all human beings, when



manifested in various forms in order to recognize its benefits, where its social determination and importance in the development process of the community stands out.

Based on the current foundations and the existence of diverse criteria provided by [Díaz, D.; Uriarte, M. and Davalo, R. \(1998\)](#), the content of physical recreation activities includes all those practices that comply with the principles of the same, in a very varied recreational function, where they imply an individual and a collective consumption, being an expression, materialization and product of certain social relations, represented in games and sports. On the other hand, it is in the position assumed by the social actor, understood in entertainment, systematic practices and fun, where the attention is produced in two movements: first, towards the recreation itself (its content) and second, aimed at taking advantage of the moments of realization.

But both movements in physical recreation present a wide variety of activities according to the geographic region where they are manifested. In Cuba, they are called physical-recreational activities, leisure time activities, mass sports, sports for all and in many occasions, they are interpreted as independent processes with different contents, but, in their interior, they all have the same significance and pursue the same objectives towards the community.

From this point of view of interpretation, three significant approaches of [Waichman, P., cited by Lema, R. \(2011\)](#) are assumed in such recreation: recreationism, sociocultural animation and educational recreation.

The first approach is a term attributed to the activities carried out in free time, having as purpose the amusement in masses. That is, in the time freed from obligations in a pleasant and healthy way, it belongs to the world of entertainment and is executed by professionals trained for this area.

The second is rooted in popular education and social participation as a form of transformation in the subject in a conscious and reflexive manner. Its purpose is educational, transforming realities, by taking into account their interests and needs; this purpose allows group work and decision making. Hence, the teacher's actions aim at modifying, generating, reflecting on or becoming aware of social or institutional values.

The third approach links the field of education as the transformation of the social actor in all its dimensions: intellectual, physical, social, cultural, affective, by means of a pedagogical or didactic model that seeks reflection, creativity, the conception of values and commitment in different areas of life, creating a link with education in non-formal contexts, by providing freedom of expression through play and ludic.

This last link is interrelated with the needs and motives of each social actor, aspects of great relevance in the development of physical recreation. Therefore, it is argued that the content, as a form of education for the community, is not limited only to the intellectual aspect; here another process is taken into account, such as the non-school formative process, by allowing a social role in its activities.

That is to say, physical recreation as an optional component of educational development shapes its system on the basis of the likes, interests, preferences and needs of the social actors and as a process it is inherent to the life of people as social beings, thus visualized by the contributions provided in relation to aptitudes, values, motor skills and physical capacities. This relationship makes it possible to analyze situations, generate knowledge





and experiences to new situations that prepares it in a comprehensive manner for social life, hence its inclusion in both the educational and sports system.

However, physical recreation as a form of education should be aimed at the physical and intellectual development of the social actors of the community. But this, as a purpose, does not have in the objectives to educate the different age groups through physical-recreational activity and as an indivisible part of the formation itself, to contemplate both physical and mental health, as well as the multilateral growth in the aspects of intellectual, physical and aesthetic education.

On the other hand, the content as practice of physical-recreational activities allows the development of habits, skills and capacities to contribute to the multilateral development of social actors within the community context, being this fundamental in education, but does not focus on the tasks, to direct the growth of physical performance capacities on the basis of the functional morphological improvement of the organism and the improvement of basic motor skills.

This means that Physical recreation cannot be seen from a traditional perspective, as a theorization and carrier of scientific conceptions without a vision that integrates the various dimensions of work or focus the process more on participation than on teaching, but it can be seen from a socio-historical-cultural perspective, which imprints, from its objective, that true character.

In addition, as an activity, it should constitute an important element in the formation of the personality itself, and its intention is to contribute to education and development through the realization of various physical-recreational and sports activities, to provide a wide range of options that make it possible to set goals with a high level of knowledge and, at the same time, to organize them in the different types of educational levels of education to the community.

However, from the educational point of view, it is not interpreted in the sport complex as a practice that encompasses everything related to the rational use of free time and drives creative and intentional movements to help the integral formation of the social actor, where it is often considered as a catalog of activities, by disconnecting it from any institutional or community operating system, minimizing the scope of content by interpreting it with a reductionist character, where each activity seems to be different in relation to others due to multiple objective and subjective obstacles, among them are:

- The existence of centralized and vertical procedures, manifested in doing strictly what is established, without taking into account in the activities an educational orientation to promote the cognitive independence and the creative capacities of the social actors in the community.
- The presence in the community of multiple institutional programs that act simultaneously, but without a process of integration among them, which causes disorientations in their objectives and contents, sometimes, clash of actions that create a reduction of their effectiveness and efficiency.

Due to these limitations, the content of the physical-recreational activities and the way they are developed in the community context has been the central point within the activity itself. At all times, the responses have been determined by different factors, among which the level of preparation reached by teachers and the conception of how such activities should be implemented due to the social task stand out.



To achieve these purposes, it is necessary to focus attention on the content of the activities as an educational form, where the social actor can productively facilitate his own learning and modes of action. At the same time, to specify changes in the conception of its methodology, insisting on the search for theoretical knowledge to guide new methods towards the constant solution of problematic situations that are manifested in its sphere of action.

On the other hand, constructive use in education, according to **Fuentes, H. and Álvarez, I. (2009)** is a complex real and subjective, individual, social process, with its own dynamics. This means that the teacher is not a simple "teacher", but a trainer of personalities and, at the same time, is a member of a family, of groups of related interests, a community, and a society, where they are also educated and formed as citizens.

Therefore, this complex process in physical recreation should not only be directed to the participation of the social actor in recreational activities of free time as a program organized and directed by teachers of that area, but in the search for solutions from the capacity of being, of forming and becoming, through learning and experience.

However, in the physical recreation program of the sport complexes, the teacher does not pay adequate attention to the content of the activities, where these play a guiding role in the behavior of the actors within the social dynamics; Hence, they are attributed by the different sciences so much importance and interest for sharing a common objective, that of understanding and interpreting the reasons for the actions of human beings to guide them within the requirements imposed by society, where at the center of their analysis are the conflicts, the solutions between being and should be and, derived from this, between knowing how to do and knowing how to be.

Then, the content of the activities in physical recreation plays a fundamental role, where **Oliveros, J. (2015)** states that it is a reflection of the conditions in which the social actor lives, from the historical formation of relationships among themselves, attitudes and actions in the course of their lives in the form of principles, norms, feelings, evaluations, representations on good, evil, duty, which together regulate, guide the moral choice and conduct of the individual in the community.

These relationships determine patterns of behavior observed in the community and the actions of social actors as a whole have a historical character throughout all of humanity, where the different socioeconomic formations and the way of acting respond to the form and predominance of the character of society, the latter determined by the dominant classes and the existing economic base.

However, in this educational process, has a transcendent role the sport complex as an institution in the community, where the physical recreation teacher and the main community organizations must respond to the formation of attitudes, convictions of the new generations to assimilate the new changes and challenges of the future society.

These changes presuppose the formation of the personality of its members, defenders of the values of socialism, so that education acquires great connotation in the current moments of profound social and economic transformations of society.



Hence the need to make modifications in the physical recreation program of the sport complexes, based on knowledge, skills and giving due importance to the education of the social actors to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the contents themselves; it is also necessary to consider them in the planning at the different levels of management and the inclusion of them in the physical-recreational activities for the community.

For this reason, physical recreation has been conceived as a necessary tool for the development of social actors according to the context where it is used. In this sense, some authors such as [Osorio, E. \(2005\)](#) and [Moreno, I. \(2006\)](#) take ideas about the basic needs of [Max Neef, M. \(1994\)](#), by arguing that it is a means for such development. In other words, it is a task that actively involves a broad spectrum of participants, generates subjective and social change, and contributes to individual growth by promoting autonomy and self-knowledge. It is a synergetic satisfaction because, in addition to satisfying the need for leisure, it can enhance the fulfillment of other needs.

In this task, the group of teachers of the sport complex as an institution and the community should be immersed, which should play, from the recreational and educational point of view, a determining role in the process, making transformations to guide and plan the activities with the possibility of promoting, in each one, those aspects that allow knowing in a more significant way the determined historical moment.

Then, each sport complex must work so that the education towards the community is oriented to the scientific and cultural development, to the formation of responsible and conscious citizens that overcome traditionalism, where the current society is responsible for the need to incorporate to the Physical recreation program those knowledge, abilities and capacities that, related to the physical-recreational activities, contribute to the personal development, to a better quality of life and, beyond the search of enjoyment, it is placed in the creation of habits, concepts, positive and favorable attitudes to the practice of some physical activity.

On the other hand, the community context as that space, characterized by an education for leisure time, would generate more than instrumental learning, would modify the thinking of the social actor in his way of participating in reality, changing behaviors, habits, attitudes, turning them into voluntary or optional in a time freed from external obligations, would conceive a need for deepening group work and self-management. That is to say, it would aspire to conceive a social actor conscious, committed and protagonist of its own activities, its history, differentiating it from school and schooling, conceived in the traditional way.

These circumstances would condition certain modes of action in the Physical recreation teacher, called praxis, where he/she would be the facilitator of group synergies and mediator between the interests of the social actors and the institutional ones, depending on the intervention content. At the same time, it would imply a dynamic approach and a flexible treatment as it is not reduced to a previous programming, since the contents and/or tasks are the physical-recreational activities of social and cultural origin that emerge, are negotiated, defined and redefined thanks to the educational activity.



## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it is stated that physical recreation, as an educational form, constitutes an important element from the content to be taught, it allows eradicating the existing limitations in the Physical recreation program, according to the methodological indications, to become a dynamic tool within the community context and to form an integral culture in free time according to the intentional, systematic and oriented character in that sense.

On the other hand, physical-recreational activities would generate alternatives towards a correct educational constructive use of that time in the community, would improve the preparation of the teacher of the combined sport complexes in their work performance, allowing an advance in the quality of life of present and future generations by contributing and promoting a more sustainable recreation.

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**Conflict of interests:**

The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

**Authors' contribution:**

**Rafael Fuentes Jordán:** Conception of the idea, literature search and review, instrument making, instrument application, compilation of information resulting from the instruments applied, statistic análisis, preparation of tables, graphs, and images, database preparation, general advice on the topic addressed, drafting of the original (first version), review and final version of the article, article correction, authorship



coordinator, translation of terms or information obtained, review of the application of the applied bibliographic standard.

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