



REVISTA LATINOAMERICANA DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES, NIÑEZ Y JUVENTUD

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Latin American Journal of Social Sciences, Childhood and Youth

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Call for submissions to the monographic issue titled:
Children, youth and pandemics: political, socio-cultural and educational challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American Journal of Social Sciences, Childhood and Youth invites professionals from different fields, educators, researchers and others interested in the field of children and youth studies to publish articles, research, essays, experiences and other writings on the reality of children and youth in the context of the health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean. For this issue, the Journal and the *Education and Pedagogy* research group from the Doctorate in Social Sciences, Childhood and Youth at the CINDE Center for Advanced Studies on Childhood and Youth and the University of Manizales in Colombia invite us to present the different realities that the pandemic is causing, as well as the multiple social, political, economic, ecological, cultural and educational problems generated by this emergency.

The Social Sciences are engaged in permanent reflection on changes in societies in terms of their socio-political dimensions. But perhaps no one could have anticipated the profound impact of a pandemic that has radically modified the daily lives of the planet's inhabitants and has slowed down the development of the world's economies. The usual routines of children, youth and adults were suddenly interrupted by the appearance of COVID-19. The first information that circulated on social networks and in the media created confusion instead of providing hard data about this new public health scenario while the number of countries and inhabitants who were victims of infections began to increase.

Latin American and Caribbean governments found themselves in the position of having to make quick decisions to prevent the spread of the virus. These included the partial and total closure of their national borders and long periods of lockdown with significant costs in the economic, social and personal dimensions of daily life, especially for the most vulnerable populations. Governments had to make decisions on behalf of all of their citizens that limited individual freedoms.

The pandemic has tested the capacity of health systems in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Not just the capacity of the hospital network, but also the human capacity of medical staff. The pandemic has undoubtedly exacerbated the problem of children and young people's access to health care and nutrition (Pan American Health Organization, 2020).

In terms of the socio-cultural dimensions of the pandemic, it is a challenge to understand the world experienced by children and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean and to think historically about collective problems and social life. *Semana* magazine observed that "the year 2020 will go down in history as the year when everything changed. It made us think about the meaning of life and our future" (Santos, 2020). The pandemic has helped us identify other forms of violence and countless inequalities in all social, economic and cultural orders and spheres, as well as the deterioration of Mother Earth, the wounds we have caused the planet, our *oikos*, our house, the house where life lives, the house that is exposed and faces more and more risks after the plundering and exploitation by humans.



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We speak of collective forgetfulness and the silence of our voices, the lack of inspiration for the arts and communications. This is how these reconstructions have been previously shared in museums, articles, libraries, urban theories, vaccines, norms, public policies and new communities. All of them are based on positive, negative or neutral perspectives from various eras and different cultures, including many that have unfortunately disappeared.

In a similar way it is expected that this issue of the Journal will collect the experiences, feelings and events of individuals in different times and places from writing that collectively reflects the diverse realities experienced during the pandemic.

The analysis of children and youth during the pandemic also reflects on education, which involves the dynamization of these processes and the opportunity for transformation in terms of social and cultural knowledge; as Freire (1969) notes, "true education is praxis, reflection and action of man on the world to transform it" (p. 7). Given the contingency of the pandemic around the world, these educational dynamics and processes haven't just highlighted the deficiencies that were already being transferred to new logics, but also other educational situations created by current conditions.

The pandemic exposed the fragility of the education system. The opportunity provided by connectivity through the internet generated a latitudinal approach and revealed that even in the so-called "first world" countries that are considered developed, recognized as powers for their economic and technological leadership, they face similar problems that will only be seen as existing in the wrongly called "third world". These include a lack of connectivity and access to devices and technological illiteracy in both urban and rural sectors. As noted in the report issued by ECLAC and UNESCO in August 2020 called *Education in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic*, inequality in digital access to educational opportunities increases pre-existing gaps in access to information and knowledge. In addition to affecting the learning process promoted through distance education, this hinders students' general socialization and inclusion. It is necessary to understand these gaps from a multidimensional perspective, because they aren't just caused by differences in access to technological equipment, but also the skills required to take advantage of this opportunity, which are unequal among students, teachers and family members responsible for caring for students and the mediation of this learning process that currently occurs at home (p. 7).

Without a doubt, new logics that were already being positioned were also accentuated. The policies, guidelines and orientations of international organizations and national governments in recent decades have highlighted the need for increasing and strengthening the presence of ICTs in educational processes. This need has become obligatory. Although a significant sector of working environments went online during lockdown, education was perhaps the sector that most radically changed its routines and social and pedagogical relations due to its face-to-face character.

The incursion and positioning of ICTs through technological devices and platforms in educational environments did occur before the pandemic, but these were not recognized as the only possible resource especially for primary and secondary schooling. Online or distance learning was a modality that, although it was increasing both supply and access, this was definitely not the preferred modality or the only one possible way of learning, which occurred following the widespread lockdowns around the world.

This situation, which over the months began to be identified as a new normality, has not just impacted education systems around the world (and of course in the region), but has also generated tensions, polemics and debates, as well as challenges. This is evidenced by the countless publications, congresses, conferences, talks and events on the topic of the pandemic that occur on a daily basis.



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Institutions have not been an exception in this process. None of the forms and representations of public life and services were prepared for this eventuality. That is why it has taken time to recognize, manage and resolve structural issues such as access (lack of equipment), connectivity and coverage, to name the most frequently mentioned, and to also rethink and re-signify pedagogical practices and teaching strategies that previously relied on face-to-face learning. As indicated by Ruiz (2020):

The widespread and dizzying adoption of distance education as a way to continue with education through digital platforms has been one of the most widespread decisions by governments and educational authorities. The virtualization of face-to-face classes, which involves a massification of education and changes in the way teaching staff work and communicate with students, has encountered various technical problems that have caused challenges with redesigning the didactic strategies of teachers and the role of students (and parents in the case of early childhood and primary education). (p. 53)

In a world in which we talk about cutting-edge technology, a globalized and interconnected world, a parallel world that didn't have access to this technology was ignored, and this is not necessarily the world of the Global South. The decolonial approach has revealed the conditions of this so-called "new normality", based on the idea that every center has its own periphery and every North has a South.

The new exceptionalism for educational processes has created new spaces of thought and new ideas about learning. For students, teachers and professors, their homes have turned into classrooms and their schedules and routines have been disrupted. Caregivers have become witnesses and, at best, classmates of their children, which has also been a challenge. Nevertheless, the translocation of spaces and times has generated diverse situations such as strengthening family ties (although not all families are so fortunate). The pandemic has also triggered expressions of violence and abuse, with victims including children. Although these are not the only reasons, the meals, coexistence and protection provided by educational institutions, which constitutes the safeguarding of rights and opportunities for these populations, are some of the reasons why States are hurriedly trying to restore face-to-face learning in schools and universities before they overcome the highest levels of contagion.

Young people have not escaped the exceptionalism that has been mentioned. Their socialization processes and educational dynamics have also been altered by these new scenarios and logics. It is important to mention that many young people have been forced to interrupt their studies as a result of the economic crisis that their families have faced.

Thus, the Latin American Journal of Social Sciences, Childhood and Youth calls on researchers and others interested in the field of children and youth studies to share their reflections on the impact of the pandemic on children and young people in the region. Investigating from a socio-political point of view implies asking: how did local and national governments respond to the challenges that children and youth faced in the pandemic? What role do public policies for children and youth play in relation to the social inequalities generated and exacerbated by the pandemic? What are the environmental lessons learned by future generations from the pandemic?

For educational and social issues, questions include: what has been the impact of the pandemic on educational systems in Latin America and the Caribbean? What have been the effects on the quality of education in the teaching and learning processes as a result of the dynamics adopted during the pandemic? What have been the family, social and professional tensions of teacher performance when working at home? What have been the effects of ICTs on the educational system following the experience of online learning? How have States guaranteed the right to education for rural, indigenous and afro-descendant populations located in rural territories? What infrastructure and biosecurity guarantees do primary and



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secondary schools and public higher education institutions have for the return of students to the classroom?

To answer the above questions, the Journal proposes four main thematic areas for the issue:

- Political challenges for children and youth in the pandemic.
- Socio-cultural challenges for children and youth in the pandemic.
- Educational challenges for children and youth in the pandemic.
- Environmental challenges.

Important dates:

Opening of the call for papers: November 2020.

Closing date for articles: November 30th, 2021.

For publication criteria and instructions, please review the *Guide for Authors* at

<http://revistaumanizales.cinde.org.co/index.php/conocenos/guia-para-los-autores-y-autoras>

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