

Initial Teacher Training In Special Education:
Contributions From The 2014-2021
Report Of The Community Action
Program Of The School Of Differential
Education Of The University Of The Americas, Chile¹

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Abstract

In the development of a professional career in the area of education, the link with the environment implies the contact of the students with the professional and social context within their training. The Community Action Program of the School of Differential Education has been an activity that fulfills this purpose and also contributes to the field of research, innovation and transfer. The purpose of this study is to know the progression and impact through the data and results obtained from the Community Action Program in the Biobío, Valparaíso and Metropolitan Regions. For this, a mixed approach with a simultaneous design was used. The collection of information is based on the compilation and documentary analysis during the period 2014-2021 and the participation of 29 key informants distributed in the three regions, through focus groups with content analysis. With this, a report of the Community Action Program was prepared during its years in operation; its results reveal a constant growth in the scope of the program and coverage benefits the development of language stimulation processes for children. This allowed ordering the evidence, covering the lack of systematic results, at a general level, to determine its evolution, contributions and progress of the processes it includes. In addition, these findings also show the contribution to the initial teacher training of the students of the Differential Education career who have lived the experience.

Keywords: Higher Education – Initial Teacher Training – Link with the environment – Community Action – Special Education

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Resumen

En el desarrollo de una carrera profesional del área de educación, la vinculación con el medio implica el contacto de los estudiantes con el contexto profesional y social dentro de su formación. El Programa de Acción Comunitaria de la Escuela de Educación Diferencial, ha sido una actividad, que cumple este fin y contribuye, además, al ámbito de investigación, innovación y transferencia. El propósito de este estudio es conocer la progresión e impacto por medio de los datos y resultados obtenidos del Programa de Acción Comunitaria en las regiones del Biobío, Valparaíso y Región Metropolitana. Para ello, se utilizó un enfoque mixto con un diseño simultáneo. La recogida de información está basada en la recopilación y análisis documental durante el periodo 2014-2021 y la participación de 29 informantes claves distribuidos en las tres regiones, a través de focus group con análisis de contenido. Con ello se elaboró una memoria del Programa de Acción Comunitaria durante sus años en funcionamiento; sus resultados revelan un crecimiento constante de la envergadura del programa y beneficios de cobertura el desarrollo de los procesos de estimulación del lenguaje para los niños. Lo que permitió ordenar las evidencias, cubrir el desconocimiento de resultados sistemáticos, a nivel general, para determinar su evolución, aportes y avances de los procesos que incluye. Además, estos hallazgos también evidencian el aporte a la formación inicial docente de los estudiantes de la carrera de Educación Diferencial que han vivido la experiencia.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza Superior – Formación Inicial Docente – Vinculación con el medio – Acción Comunitaria – Educación Especial

Introduction

Since the public policies aimed at children a decade ago in Chile, initial teacher education and training has been geared towards promoting the social sphere, i.e. interactions that take place in daily life and in non-formal educational settings. In this case, the Community Action Programme of the School of Special Education is implemented in governmental child protection organisations. Also, both the guidelines of the Universidad de Las Américas as a training institution, the Faculty of Education and the degree in Special Education incorporate aspects associated with the community and social environment, so that the Community Action Programme achieves relevance and coherence, which transcends to the link with the environment and direct work with community agencies that require it.

The Universidad de Las Américas in its Strategic Development Plan 2022 - 2026 (UDLA, 2022b) declares as one of its hallmarks, in addition to student-centred learning, the development of transversal skills and the appropriation of institutional values. These values include civic responsibility, community commitment and professional ethics. The Faculty of Education incorporates within its mission that students acquire skills for their professional development in the school system and insert themselves in diverse educational contexts, as well as, the link with the environment, in an effective way (Faculty of Education, 2018), in order to feed back the formative processes and the transfer of knowledge among others.

Considering the aforementioned guidelines and directives, the Community Action Programme of the Special Education Teaching Programme, which has been in operation since 2014, responds to the mission of the Universidad de Las Américas: "To offer lifelong learning opportunities to young people and adults, through quality teaching that enhances their capabilities, in close integration with the world of work and communities, and to contribute to the sustainable development of the country through

Research, Creation and Linkage with the Environment" (UDLA, 2022b, p.24), which justifies the continuity of the Programme and is relevant for the initial training of students as it links them in a meaningful way to the community and enriches their learning opportunities, as stipulated in the mission of the degree programme.

One of the guidelines on child care established by the United Nations defines that living in a family is a right, as well as promoting an environment conducive to effective and stable development, but in Latin America and the Caribbean 1 in 5 children is extremely poor, and 7 out of 10 children in Chile have suffered some kind of abuse related to poverty, inequality and social exclusion. This has repercussions on their development, not only at the educational level, but also from a holistic perspective, which is why the Community Action Programme makes sense and seeks to reduce barriers in the child care and protection system through early intervention. In addition, it hopes to raise awareness in future teachers, seeking strategies that promote development in the child and youth population, which is currently marked by socio-economic conditions and inequality (SOS Children's Villages Chile, 2020).

The UDLA Community Action Programme in Special Education, which began in 2014, seeks to reduce barriers to social and educational inclusion through intervention from a cognitive perspective, in the area of language stimulation. The information gathered made it possible to demonstrate the reality, experiences and impact generated in the centres, in the participants and in the professional training processes, community action and the protection of children through intervention and language stimulation. As well as generating knowledge, transfer to teaching and promoting awareness for disciplinary and practical training, based on the Hexagonal Management Model of the Universidad de La Américas (UDLA, 2022a), which contemplates the priority and representative elements of the training work (graduate profile, bidirectionality with the practice centres, training focuses and articulation between subjects).

This study was relevant because the Community Action Programme complies with Chilean higher education regulations (Law No. 21.091/2018 and No. 20.129/2006) and with the UDLA's Policy of Linking with the Environment, on the role of universities in the generation of common and systematic spaces with the environment.

Considering the above, the questions that guided this study were: What are the results obtained by the Community Action Programme of the School of Special Education in the regions of Biobío, Valparaíso and Metropolitan from 2014 to 2021? What are the characteristics of the Community Action Programme process? How does the Community Action Programme contribute to the initial teacher training of students in the special needs education programme? From these questions arose the General Objective, which is to know the results obtained from the Community Action Programme of the School of Special Education, through a mixed study on its implementation in the regions of Biobío, Valparaíso and the Metropolitan Region from 2014 to 2021. And the specific objectives: (1) Characterise the Community Action Programme from its history and socio-educational processes developed in the period 2014 - 2021. (2) To analyse the results of the Community Action Programme with respect to the meaning given by the key actors involved in its execution. (3) To generate spaces for discussion on the information gathered, which will allow for improvements in the services of the Community Action Programme and the promotion of the participation and continuity of students, graduates and collaborators.

Methods

This research responded to a mixed approach, as it considered a quantitative line that consisted in the collection of information on the results obtained from the Community Action Programme 2014-2021 and a qualitative line because it was introduced in the content of the discourse of people participating in the programme, which involved knowing their experiences, motives and appreciations (Vieytes, 2004; Hernández, et al., 2010). Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative instruments were used to collect and analyse relevant background and information to meet the proposed objective.

The scope of this research was descriptive, defined as "that which seeks to detail the priorities, profiles and characteristics of people, groups, communities, or other phenomena that are subject to analysis" (Hernández, et al., 2010, p.81), since, as noted, this study made it possible to determine quantifiable elements of the Community Action Programme as well as experiences, opinions and descriptions of the programme at different stages of its existence (Vieytes, 2004; Hernández et al., 2010; Ruiz, 2009; Pereira, 2011; Izcara, 2014).

Regarding the design, Pereira (2011) points out that for a mixed approach study, especially in pedagogical issues and when there is a clear intention of the researchers to provide complete and comprehensive information, giving voice to the participants, it is necessary to use both numerical data and qualitative data, which are relevant in the process of deepening knowledge. The design of this research was simultaneous as it considered both quantitative and qualitative lines, which are carried out in parallel, with clearly established strategies. From this perspective, data on the scope of the Community Action Programme was quantified, considering the number of participants, both students and academics from UDLA, external or from the same governmental child protection agencies, professionals, adolescents, children, number and type of centres, among other data, considered as a non-experimental design (Hernández, et al., 2010). From the qualitative perspective, the different experiences and experiences of the participants in the Community Action Programme will be known, where the design of textual analysis through the technique of content analysis of the corpus collected (Valles, 2000; Vieytes, 2004; Ruiz, 2009; Izcara, 2014). This study was carried out in a specific and unique time frame and therefore corresponds to the transactional category (Hernández, et al., 2010).

The procedure was carried out in stages: (I) Collection of information, consisting of the collection of information on the implementation of the Community Action Programme in the three sites; (II) Field work (selection of informants and obtaining informed consents, application of focus groups) in the three sites; (III) Analysis of the information or results and discussion; (IV) Dissemination or socialisation of the results and dissemination (construction and drafting of the Community Action Programme Report, participation in seminar) and (V) Conclusion and design of scientific article, in addition to the drafting of the final report of the project. The start of the research process was from 20 October 2021 to June 2022.

Moving towards the specifics, the importance of the population is revealed which, according to Arias, (2012), defines it as "a finite or infinite set of elements with common characteristics for which the conclusions of the research will be extensive" (p.81). To meet the objective of this research, the study population will focus on the students of the cohorts 2014 to 2021 of the career of Pedagogy in Special Education of the Universidad de Las Américas at the Viña del Mar, Concepción and Santiago campuses. In addition to academics who participated as monitors or guides in the Community

Action Programme, belonging to the same career of the three campuses. In this context and according to Hernández et al. (2010), participants or sample is understood as "a subset of elements that belong to that set defined in its characteristics which we call population" (p.175).

This project was carried out with a convenience sample, which refers to the available cases or participants, who have been part of the Community Action Programme in the years 2014 to 2021, to which we have access (Hernández, et al., 2010). In the present research, the participants or sample of students or graduates who were part of the Community Action Programme will be 4 participants from the Concepción campus, 6 participants from the Santiago campus and 13 participants from the Viña del Mar campus. In addition to 1 participant from the Concepción branch, 1 participant from the Santiago branch and 4 participants from the Viña del Mar branch who represent the monitors or guides of the Community Action Programme. Recruitment was carried out via email or telephone using information from the database at each site, and formal invitations were then sent out, together with the informed consent form for the application of the instruments.

To collect information that was used within the quantitative line, for the execution of the research, three quantitative data recording forms were prepared: a database with the background of the participants of the PAC during the years 2014 - 2021, a quantitative database with the background of the programmes and a record of content, referring to the collection of evidence (reports, PPT, etc.) in each of the venues.

For the line of instruments and qualitative techniques such as: Focus Group, a personal and open interview, for which a thematic script for volunteers and a script for collaborator interviews were used. It should be noted that these techniques are operationalised in the data collection instruments. Within the same context, and according to what Fariñas (2010) mentions, he defines these instruments as "any resource that the researcher can use to approach the phenomena and extract information from them" (n.p.). Those detailed below, based on Hernández et al. (2014), are:

- Thematic Focus Group script, collaborative thematic script: as a realistic technique of social analysis, it is based on an important model, because it intends to transform the people who are part of the group according to the intervention of each participant. The subject of this analysis is the discourse created by the group members through orientations. It is worth mentioning that the two instruments are modified according to the participants and their performance within the community action programme.

- Personal interview: the objective is to deepen the information obtained in the questionnaire, as well as to find out expectations and points of view, and to offer the interviewee the possibility of an unstructured conversation, based on questions generated spontaneously as part of the communicative interaction, which does not mean that it is a completely adrift conversation (a thematic script was used). Non-verbal communication was appreciated together, so that the interviewer paid attention to interpret what the interviewee is not able to say in words. The interview was conducted by a qualified person (interviewer), which corresponded to members of the team, their role was crucial.

With regard to the ethical aspects of the proposal, these were: the informed consent stipulates that the research does not present any risk for the participants. This document stipulates that there is a voluntary option for the application of the instruments, both in terms of participation and during the research process. It also explains the confidentiality of identity and the process of obtaining information from the participants. Therefore, each

participant has the option of signing the consent form prior to the application of the instrument, and also during the execution of the study techniques they can indicate their desire not to continue being part of the study.

It should be noted that this study obtains information on the historical and current background of the Community Action Programme of the Special Education Teaching Programme at the Universidad de Las Américas. This implies having memories, perceptions and anecdotes about the experience lived during the participation in the activities of the aforementioned activity.

From the direct benefit in the participation and investigative process as well as the results that were obtained from this analysis and interpretation of information regarding the Community Action Programme of the UDLA allowed to visualize a before and an after regarding the intervention of the PAC and for this, in this study it was possible to obtain information that will favour the analysis and future interventions within the participating establishments as well as within the future teachers or the teachers currently in the school.

Regarding the recruitment and selection of participants, it was carried out by the co-researchers responsible for contacting, inviting, informing and recruiting, through digital means, since the sample of participants includes students, graduates, academics, internal and external monitors, the recruitment takes place in the months of November and December 2021 in the regions: Metropolitan Santiago (XIII), Valparaíso (V) and Biobío (VIII).

Participants were contacted informally through social networks, considering: Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, email and voice calls through the database, in order to cover the years 2014 - 2021 and thus be able to reach the entire population that has participated in the CAP, after the formal contact with the subjects of study formally attached by email a "letter of invitation of participants" with the corresponding information of the research, The means of data collection is defined through videoconferencing on the Zoom Meeting platform, ending with the sending and receipt of the informed consent, a requirement that the participants sign an informed consent to accept the objectives and conditions of this research process.

Once the information has been collected, the entire team of collaborators will be in charge of organising the evidence by location, the transcriptions of the interviews and the analyses, signing a confidentiality agreement specific to this situation and procedure. All documents, transcripts or elements associated with this research were safeguarded by the responsible researcher and team members. The information will be kept for a period of 5 years and then destroyed.

The co-researchers in charge of the transcriptions at each site (Alejandro Armijo from Santiago, Karina Astudillo from Concepción and Marta Paredes from Viña del Mar) signed the letter of confidentiality. The personal data collected will be coded to maintain the anonymity of the participants, considering also that the participants signed the informed consent. Once the research has been completed, the information will be stored for two years and after this time will be handed over to the directors of the degree programmes at each site. It is noted that the information may be used for purposes deemed appropriate by the head of the special needs education department (e.g. accreditation processes) or other future research processes.

Results

In this section the results will be presented first in the quantitative phase, then in the qualitative phase and finally in the analysis and discussion of the results.

1. Quantitative Phase.

Regarding the quantitative line, where, as mentioned, the registration forms were used and specific data was collected for each site for the years 2014 and 2021. Table 1, on the following page, shows a comparative table of the progression of the Community Action Programme in the period studied. The table shows the participants, who were internal lecturers, internal monitors and internal student participants, belonging to UDLA and the external lecturers or collaborators participating from the centres where the CAP was implemented.

A noteworthy achievement is the number of beneficiaries that the programme has been able to impact in the process of language stimulation. This figure reaches 543 children from the different participating institutions in this period. It should be noted that the year 2020 and 2021 were impacted by the pandemic. This is visualised by a drop in the number of participants.

Table 1 Comparative table of progression Community Action Programme 2014-2021

In the following table the grey columns indicate that the programme had not been initiated at that site.

	Year	2014			2015			2016			2017			2018			2019			2020			2021			Total
		Loaction	Viña del	Concepció	Santiago	Viña del	Concepció	Santiago	Viña del	Concepció	Santiago	Viña del	Concepció	Santiago	Viña del	Concepció	Santiago	Viña del	Concepció	Santiago	Viña del	Concepció	Santiago			
Actores	Internal invited teachers			1	1		1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	22	
	Internal Monitor			s/i	1		s/i	1	s/i	1	1	s/i	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	14	
	Internal Students			s/i	6		s/i	8	s/i	6	5	s/i	5	8	8	7	6	8	8	2	5	5	6	6	7	106
	External invited teachers			s/i	2		s/i	2	s/i	2	2	s/i	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	30
	TOTALS			s/i	10		s/i	13	s/i	10	9	s/i	11	13	12	13	12	12	14	4	7	7	8	8	9	172

From 2014 to 2019 it was biannual, so the participants of the two periods are added together. From 2020 and 2021 the Action Programme is annual.

In 2020 the figure of the monitor is eliminated, assuming the role of the person in charge of the Community Action Programme.

s/i= no information

Figure 1 presents the comparison of internal and external participants of the Community Action Programme 2014-2021, with mean trend line of progression (dotted line). It also shows the clear incidence of the pandemic in the participants.

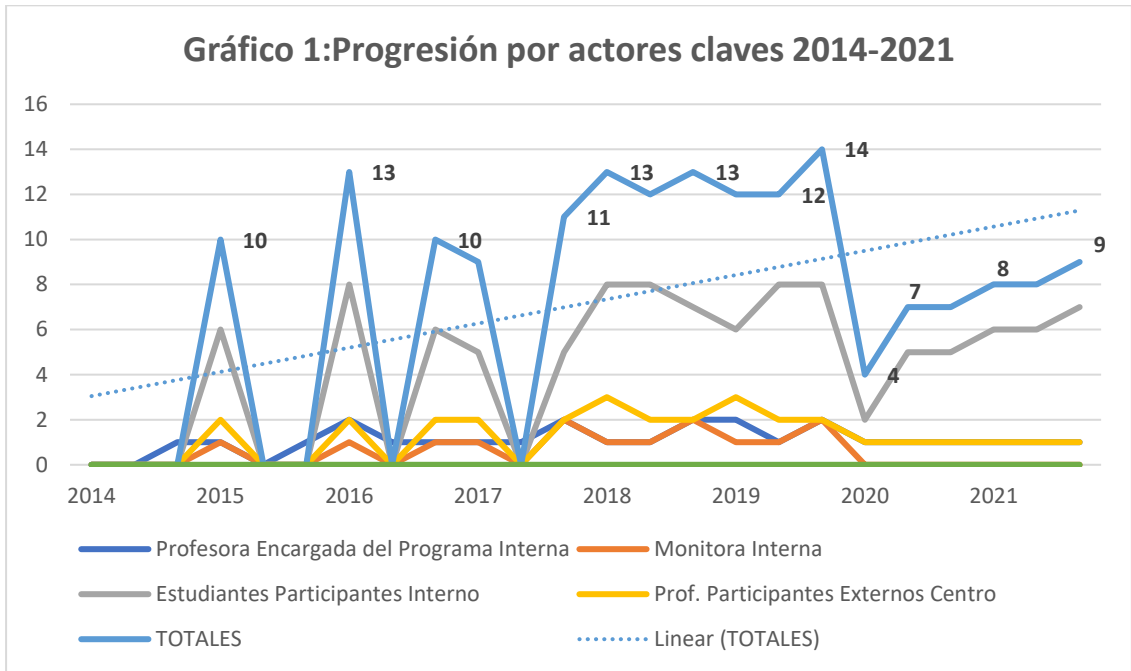
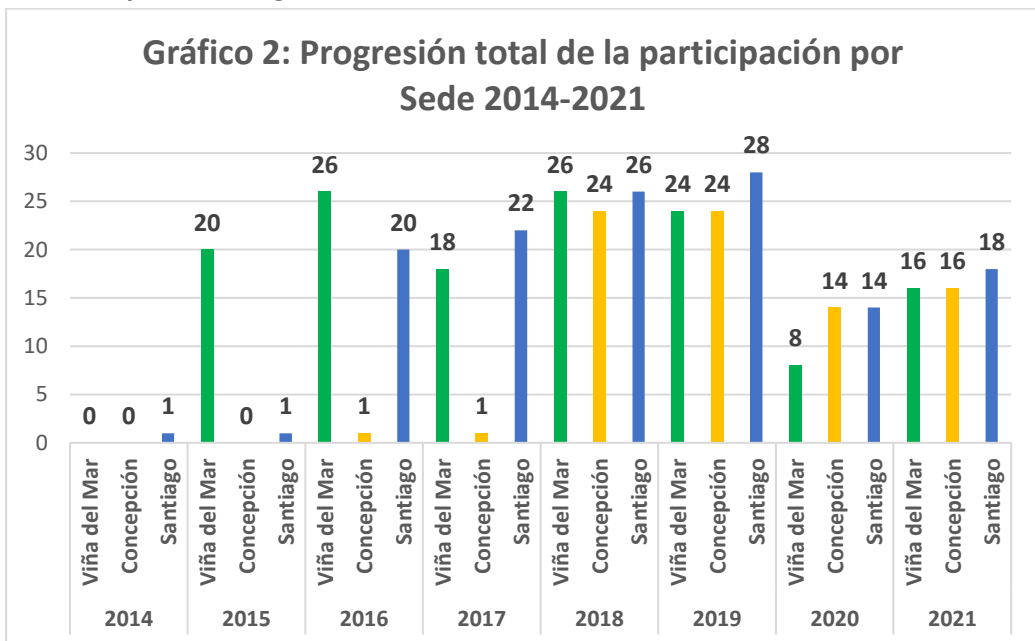


Figure 2 shows the data by location and year for the number of participants in the Community Action Programme..



It should be noted that in the first years no information is obtained in some periods about the participants and that the year 2018 and 2019 works with a greater number of participants than the rest of the years, achieving an average of 25 beneficiaries in both years. And again there is a decrease in 2020 and 2021, given the pandemic conditions affecting the world.

Qualitative Phase.

In this phase, codes were used for the key actors in the community action programme. These were students (E), UDLA teacher or collaborator (CU), researcher (I) and external collaborator or manager (EC). The categories and sub-categories analysed were: recruitment, entry requirements, motivation, dissemination, number of volunteers, process, elements and content of the programme, experiences, relationships and coexistence, implications of participation in the programme, functions and roles performed, actions specific to each function, organisation and suggestions.

The results, considering the processes included in the programme, show that the participation of volunteers stands out, which is manifested in terms of attitudes and skills, as well as academic, personal and professional performance. These are characteristics that strengthen the work of community action, and in turn, this faces a high value and social impact, ethical and professional commitment. This validates the selection of students participating in the Programme. Also, the functioning of the Community Action Programme, between 2014 and 2021, has evolved by improving its structure, processes and interventions.

Table 2 shows the category matrix used with an exemplification. Of some registration units. Reported by student collaborators. Internal and external.

Table 2 Category matrix and examples of recording unit.

ETAPA	CATEGORIAS	EJEMPLO FRAGMENTO FOCUS GROUP/ENTREVISTA
CAP Recruitment	- - Student volunteering	"First it was the teachers who informed us, and then among the same colleagues who were interested, we put together a group and it was done" (E21).
	- - Transfer of information.	(...) I think that this is fundamental, the information from the wonderful base, (...) and from there it happened to me that in the group that was formed here in Viña, although they are classmates, they are not necessarily friends (CU3).
	- - Partners.	"...I think that eeh (2 sec) as they have done so far, I think they should be very careful in looking for the right people who can enter the centre, who have a certain profile". (C1)
CAP Membership	- - Entry requirements.	"(...I remember that a sort of ceremony was held for the colleagues who were leaving the programme and those who were taking over. Therefore, that's when we found out and there is also from that minute, as you say, it was requested that whoever wanted to, could do it". (E3)
	- - Participation process.	"(...but I do feel that it is like something more personal to be able to be part of this action programme and contribute a grain of sand in the development and also eeh in the feeling of these children." (E17)
	- - Commitment and motivation.	"But if you are interested in this motivation, because you want to, that is, if you are appointed, you don't ask, do you know that you want to participate? Or it is not because perhaps you can contribute something." (CU4)
		"The more hands there are that can give love, care, attention, the better, so I have always been open to anyone who wants to help" (C1).
CAP Dissemination	- - Compilation of experiences.	"(...that is, and I have mentioned it to other girls, to a girl who was in the internship at my school, who was... I think she is now in this one."(E24) "(...) I will never forget it because as I am the delegate of my classes ... I was also allowed to hand in my own class. I was also allowed to give information to my cohort" (E4).
	- - Dissemination media.	"(...is that they are replicating their experience for future generations, so these girls are really going to be, I don't know, evangelisers of this issue with their peers in the future, I take it for granted that this programme is going to change thanks to this experience". (CU3)
	- - Dissemination material.	"(...) it was quite positive because I think that this type of experience or action is made by people, and I think it was quite a human group, which had all the moral qualities that a person can have, I think that enriched the whole process, the dedication to the children in this case". (C1)

It is important to highlight the main achievements and opportunities for improvement that have been detected in this research process. One of the most relevant achievements of the Community Action Programme is its sustainability over time and its improvement as each year progresses. Considering that this year 2022 is the ninth version. In addition, the programme has been consolidated as an action associated on the one hand with the link with the environment and on the other hand with the learning and service methodology that has been gradually incorporated into the Universidad de Las Américas. On the other hand, the processes of early intervention in which the students participate are highlighted, considering that this is a fundamental factor when preventing or facing a diagnostic accompaniment, thus allowing to promote a better future, quality of life and decrease of difficulties within the schooling stage. The interaction processes of the volunteers with the beneficiaries of the Community Action Programme, the pedagogical resources such as those of intervention, which are created and made by the participants of the programme, promoting the value of service and social commitment. As well as, the practical experiences where the internal organisation by the participants is highlighted, in relation to the intervention processes, the implementation of structures and routines to enhance the integral learning and strengthening of the essential milestones for the development, intervention and stimulation of language.

Similarly, the Community Action Programme encourages the participation of future teachers of special education, providing a preliminary opportunity to understand the guidelines of the systems with which they will be confronted in the near future. In the same way, it promotes the development of soft skills and socio-emotional management for students, as well as for professionals belonging to the centres, in order to promote commitment, motivation and quality in academic processes.

The main achievements of the Community Action Programme over the years have been academic progress through comprehensive training for the students, which has not only allowed them to develop academic skills, but also to contrast theory with the practical development of what the special education teacher does, facing highly vulnerable realities, as well as difficulties in language development. Participating in programmes in non-school environments, with the characteristics of welcoming, caring for and protecting children, has allowed for professional interaction with different specialists, which generates an environment that nurtures the academic training stage.

One of the main opportunities for improvement mentioned by the participants of the Community Action Programme refers to dissemination, pointing out that they have been informed mainly by academics. On the other hand, they state that they can improve the accompaniment and feedback

from the internal agents of the centres, considering the lack of previous experience with the centres. Also, the participants recognise that, in the first interventions, the activities did not correspond to the ages of the participants, which was adapted and discussed with those in charge of the programme. There was also a lack of resources at this stage of the programme, which was taken into account by the students in order to improve the quality of the practices.

In addition, difficulties were noted in the organisation with the Centres, considering that each one, in addition to being external to the University, has its own system and structures for carrying out the interventions. The time factor was also indicated, where the intervention sessions are affected. Given the work methodology and format of the centres' own activities, unknown to the students, it is difficult to strengthen learning and comprehensive interventions from a professional perspective.

The students emphasise that the family is a fundamental factor when referring to the evolution or a language development disorder, as it can increase or decrease the effectiveness of the intervention and there is no articulation in the Community Action Programme. However, it should be noted that the reality of the children in the Centres prevents the link with families.

In terms of opportunities for improvement, during the research process, the various participants made suggestions for incorporation into the Community Action Programme, which are summarised below:

- Maintain and continue with the Community Action Programme, including other times such as children's holidays, and increase the time spent working with the centres.
- Disseminate the programme and the importance of community action or service during teaching with greater emphasis.
- Linking with other careers, not only in pedagogy, but also creating multi-professional teams, with accompaniment that includes a teacher or other professional such as a psychologist or kinesiologist.
- Creation of instances for psycho-emotional preparation for the environment associated with the Centres.
- Provide accompaniment for the external collaborators of the centres, from the university.
- Consider making work in the Community Action Programme part of the syllabus, because they say it is important for the training processes.

- Incorporation of students from other courses, not only in the third year, so that there is a link with the programme from the start.

It is understood that the Community Action Programme still presents challenges and opportunities for improvement, but it is a programme that has been forged within the career, which each year promotes changes and student participation to prepare them and strengthen their skills, since the realities are diverse in educational contexts, allowing to improve the commitment and social work done by each of our students and graduates.

The results of this research process of the Community Action Programme of the Special Education Pedagogy Degree, in the three campuses of the Universidad de Las Américas located in the regions of Biobío, Valparaíso and Metropolitana, allowed us to know and confirm how this programme contributes to the initial teacher training of students. This was one of the initial questions in this research and this section hopes to answer this question.

The results obtained and from the information gathered by various means (final reports, presentations, discussions, focus groups with students, monitors and external collaborators), allow us to consider the following aspects categorised in some areas of teacher training in the degree programme as a contribution:

In the conceptual area, the students state that the programme allowed them to reinforce, deepen and apply the contents associated with the speciality of the degree, such as language levels, didactics, as well as learning about the type of multidisciplinary teamwork, among other knowledge specific to the teaching profession.

The attitudinal area is achieved by knowing and understanding in situ the students who will be the focus of the exercise of their profession, which strengthens empathy towards children, "to be stronger", to commit to knowing how to be a teacher and to prepare emotionally and professionally with the knowledge and adequate material resources to be able to provide support to students.

The procedural domain offers experiences to strengthen collaborative work, to work in teams with different professionals. The context offers challenges that urge students to adapt by looking for new strategies and methodologies to intervene from the speciality in the field of language and to learn how to use didactic material. In times of pandemic to the use of technology, to adapt as a teacher to adverse situations and to use online material.

The practical experience, the programme helps to link with the environment and to get to know different realities, which broadens the range of knowledge not only in the classroom or in the educational field, but also in the social field, such as the centres associated with the protection of children's rights.

In the personal area, it allowed them to grow as a person and they consider that this leads them to become better teachers. In addition, the students point out that it gives them the strength to face different realities, with direct cases that they will deal with in real life. They describe it as an "enriching" process for each one of them.

The ethical-professional training broadens the range of action, adapting to non-school systems, sharing with other professionals, a social commitment to children and to the career itself.

Discussion and conclusion

With regard to the process developed in the Community Action Programme, it is unquestionable to sustain its progress as well as its effectiveness, from a quantitative point of view, where the evidence includes the product of the educational community, where the numbers endorse and show how the emergence of this in one site promotes the subsequent generation of this in the other sites, This causes a gradual and significant expansion of the number of students, collaborators and external agents, identifying its persistence throughout the formative cycles, seeing the integral formation of the student body as rooted, promoting a fundamental learning to face the educational contexts.

It is understood from a qualitative perspective, the motivation and initiative of the student body (E) to participate in volunteering, since this feature is a fundamental element of the growth of the Community Action Programme, this accompanied by the process of promotion and selection of students to participate and contribute to aspects of linking the needs in governmental shelters, This, together with the support of collaborators (CU) in the recruitment and entry processes as well as in the training process, which in turn allows the centre's staffing needs to be covered, which positively intervenes in professional development and, together with the collaboration of external agents (C) belonging to the centres, makes the experience a component of personal and professional growth for the students participating in the programme.

A large part of the structural and elemental development of the Programme is due to the internal (CU) and external (C) support, since, over the years, these have provided the life and the integral and formative functioning of the programme in the three centres, this being an ideal scenario for the development of new skills and knowledge based on the participation, experience and motivation of the students to contribute to the work that these centres carry out with children who, at some point, have seen their rights violated and deprived of their rights.

It is understood that the individual and group experiences of the students who have previously participated in the Community Action Programme are a fundamental part of the means of dissemination to the new generations of

students of Special Education who are progressively increasing, as shown by the quantitative data and expressed in their discourse from the qualitative sphere for "wanting" to be informed and participate in this enriching experience.

In summary, the Community Action Programme is a benefit for the achievement of competences associated with the graduate profile, offering meaningful, experiential and social learning opportunities for future professional and work-related activities. It offers direct real-life situations that allow students to reaffirm their vocation, as one of the student volunteers says "it reaffirmed my commitment to want to improve, to want to improve the system, to improve special education and education in general, to recognise that it is a duty".

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