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The Promotion of a Health Culture From the Experience of the Pablo De Olavide University (Spain)

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Abstract: This article looks at the experience of health promotion with regard to higher education and university social responsibility. The authors acknowledge the necessity and demand for work and education on health, care and “self-care” within the context of higher education through the identification of elements that appear mostly in youth culture but also in society as a whole. The article reflects the experience of the Vice-Rector’s Office for Social Participation from 2007 to 2012 in a regulatory and social context that promotes health and interaction with universities and, externally, with public administration, private companies and society, as well as a number of activities within the framework of health promotion. It explains the impact of this abroad and the consequences for the Pablo de Olavide University, Seville’s public university, of external interaction with the administration of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia and other national and international entities. Finally, it reflects on what was accomplished and the challenges pending.

Keywords: promotion, health, education, healthy universities

On the university's need and responsibility to work and educate on health

In the past century, most European ideological systems entered a dynamic where values were lost and this was responsible for a sense of emptiness and crisis in 21st-century society. In this context, young people in their formative years possessing transformative ideals and a participatory spirit have encountered an ideological vacuum and consumerist greed. Despite this, they have demonstrated a desire to participate and may be seen as major human capital in need of education to improve their actions with regard to their own care and that of society, to the benefit of both.

In essence, universities are educational, formative institutions that should never isolate themselves from their environment. Otherwise, it would be impossible for them to engage in a constant process of interaction and feedback that benefits the whole of society at different levels: internal, local, regional and global. At the same time, universities contribute ideas, visions and sometimes solutions that can assist politicians and other social agents with their specific work more effectively. It should be noted that the formative action of universities that is received voluntarily in freely configured activities, for which students can add credits to their studies separately from academic content, is a key element in the development of social policies due to the sense of social commitment that underlies it. This must continue; it will undoubtedly foster the participation and cooperation of civil society in solving different problems. As public entities, universities must provide a first-rate public service: higher education and the training of professionals, but they also have a contribution to make to non-formal education, which is at least as important as the training of the most excellent professionals: training the best people to employ social responsibility in their professional excellence and transfer to society what it has been invested in them.

The aims of the Pablo de Olavide University (hereinafter, the POU) include attending to a series of social and cultural tasks in keeping with the functions set out in its Statutes, which were organised and implemented by the Vice-Rector's Offices that were competent in the area. Two circumstances advised a change of model. The first was of a factual nature: the great importance of the proper treatment of issues that affect everyone as a social group. This includes effective equality between men and women, accessibility and other examples of functional diversity, problems with regard to social dependency and care, issues related to prevention and health promotion etc. The second was of a legal nature, such as the regulation of these issues effected in various regulatory instruments, some with the status of State or Autonomous Regional law. These involve the appearance of real rights and

obligations that in many cases concern public entities as promoters of these rights and obligations (Martínez, 2017, p.171)

This ethos that has prevailed since the POU's foundation gave rise to the work of the Vice-Rector's Office for Social Participation (hereinafter VROSP). This work has the following aims:

- Information and awareness of all aspects of interest with regard to the Social Rule of Law.
- Lifelong integral formation of the individual.
- Social intervention and participatory action: with entities outside the University
- The university's ethical commitment to society.
- Promotion of ethical, social, healthy and environmental criteria.
- Fostering in a transversal manner of training and study with regard to the university's Social Responsibility.
- Promotion of interest in the transfer of university experiences that provide solutions to issues in its social environment by fostering university participation aimed at achieving social benefits.
- Activities with regard to applied social research and social knowledge transfer.

Since the POU was founded, many projects have embraced the ethos that underpins the work and identity of the Vice-Rector's Office related to "what is social": a necessary commitment to our time that translates into issues of profound social significance that are selected for work that is integral and multidimensional from specific levels such as creativity and artistic expression, up to more abstract levels such as education in values. The consistent practice of this line of work is ultimately what brings experience, efficiency and impact to society.

Undoubtedly, the issue of health, quality of life and care in an ageing society such as that of Spain and many Mediterranean countries, responds to a key question of social scientific interest that may be applied both to programmes involving the public administrations concerned and the society affected. The progressive growth of those over 65 years of age with the concomitant increase in the population who requires care, has set off alarms in EU countries that, embroiled in a debate on Welfare State reform, has placed the question of the social organisation of care for a growing dependent population onto the public agenda (Zambrano, Martín Palomo & Muñoz Terrón, 2015, p. 127): we can all become the caregivers of those affected by age, illness and/or accidents and, at the same time, require care ourselves. It is this idea of interdependence that makes care so important (Durán, 2018, p.80; Martín Palomo, 2016, p.25; Nakano Glenn, E. 2000, p. 89; Zambrano, Martín Palomo & Olid 2018, p. 349). We need both to educate others and to educate ourselves in coping with these situations. An example of this interest is the

study promoted by the VROSP: Family caregivers of the elderly. An arduous and laborious task. Reality and future prospects¹ which calls for education in care ethics.

This interest in the topic of solidarity, care and the promotion of health and quality of life is embodied in some of the aims proposed by the VROSP. These include raising awareness in the university community of the importance of health, solidarity-based values and the individual's responsibility for self-care in the broad sense, thereby promoting studies on solidarity (Martínez García & Sancho Porras, 2008, p. 73; Martínez García & Sancho Porras, 2011, pp. 19-26) and various health areas such as healthy habits, nutrition, drug dependency, accidents etc. All the information, awareness, training and research aimed at the university community was channelled in a process intended to form values, attitudes, modes of action and behaviours in favour of care and concern for the environment, and in line with promoting a culture of solidarity, care and self-care on the understanding that integral health lies at the heart of everything.

Creation of a line of action on integral health and the environment in the policy of the POU

One of the first international references to health's association with three principal elements, such as, the biological, the psychological and the social, appears in the definition of health in the Preamble of the Constitution of the World Health Organisation in 1946: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease." (UN, 1986). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also includes health as an explicit right: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family" (Article 25.1). The United Nations Millennium Declaration, signed in 2000, includes among its eight goals to be achieved by 2015, three related to health problems and disease: 1) to reduce child mortality; 2) to improve maternal health; and 3) to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases². It's interesting to mention also that in 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)³, adopted the goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

The EU⁴ proposed a set of principles, goals and strategies to improve health in the community. These include: reinforcing the citizen's role in

¹ Its authors are the professors/researchers: Vicente Pérez Cano, Gonzalo Musitu Ochoa and David Moreno Ruíz.

² <https://www.un.org/en/development/devagenda/millennium.html>

³ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

⁴ Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013 European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:009E:0056:0064:ES:PDF>

health, understanding health and disease as transversal elements of other social and economic policies, and increasing investment in prevention and information. The need for society and State to support basic rights such as the right to health has been recognised on numerous occasions (Bobbio, Veca & Pontora, 1985, p.34; Herrera Gómez & Castón Boyer, 2003, p.89; Rorty, 1989, p.94; Zambrano, 2010, p.199).

Health is an aspect of social reality that has given rise to a wide range of organisations and associations in civil society: the European Health Forum, the European Institute of Health and Social Welfare, European or international associations fighting cancer and other diseases, patient support and a long etcetera. All endorse the importance of addressing issues related to health in not only its medical but also its social dimension. The field of sociology proposes that the knowledge related to people's health and self-care be incorporated in an interdisciplinary fashion. This is because the way we understand health and disease in different international scenarios has been changing since the 1980s as a result of what is known as "holistic vision", which is based on a series of approaches (Mora & Urruela, 1991, p.26):

- Health should be regarded as the integration of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being.
- The individual should assume responsibility for their own health or illness by practicing self-care.
- Holistic practitioners should act as teachers in order to help and educate people to develop the attitudes, beliefs, dispositions, habits and practices that promote their own well-being.
- Health care systems should be transformed in order to orient them to treat the behavioural, social and environmental causes of illness.

In higher education, it is necessary to influence university-society relations and investigate to what extent the individual feels jointly responsible in the building of this more integrated, fairer, more supportive, more sustainable, more egalitarian society; in short, one that is healthier and happier.

Concern for the cultural value of health led the VROSP of the POU to promote a strategic line of action. Essentially, this focused on creating a health culture and preventing possible undesirable attitudes that might affect the well-being and health of citizens, and more specifically, of the university community. This was the purpose of the "Study on prevalence, attitudes, patterns and motivations of the university population with regard to drug use"⁵, a basis for underpinning subsequent awareness-raising and training

⁵ Led by Juan Agustín Morón Marchena and Alfredo Jesús Castillo Manzano and conducted on the basis of the agreement signed between the Regional Ministry of Equality and Social Welfare of the Regional Government of Andalusia and the POU.

on drug dependency and addictions, which affect the health of young people in particular.

Various studies (Kopelman & Moskop, 1981, p.206; Mora & Urruela, 1991, p. 26; Martínez, 2017, p.156) identify the training needs of all the social agents involved in health promotion. These are classified into two main areas:

1. New approaches and interdisciplinary theories of health promotion.
2. Development of aptitudes, skills and communication pertaining to sociology and organisational culture (collaboration, coordination, teamwork and networking in the area of health).

University extension and participation must lead to the development of an integrating role of its cultural initiatives. This would integrate the multidisciplinary approaches that have been adversely affected by the excessive specialisation of the various disciplines. The VROSP, in an educational context of culture and science, proposed three initiatives:

- Addition of “social knowledge transfer” to technological knowledge transfer, assess its impact on society and consider it in terms of its economic and image value.
- Training in a culture of personal growth as well as healthy and happy living.
- A major presence of the VROSP lines of action in the Strategic Plan 2009-2011 in its relationship with University Social Responsibility and/or university policies on social commitment.

From 2007, the VROSP of the POU focused on the policy implementation and the management and coordination of the social and cultural issues that took place at the university in order to satisfy the demands and needs of the university community and society in general. This followed the mandate of the Organic Law on Universities, 6/2001, of December 21, the legislation creating the POU, Law 3/1997, of July 1, and its Statutes and its Strategic Plan, which state that it must foster the participation and the social promotion of the culture and humanistic values that underpin the integral formation of the individual. This refers to the acquisition of an ethical commitment to a variety of issues that include solidarity, health promotion and care, gender equality, disability care, defence of human rights and respect for the environment.

The proposal highlights the VROSP’s goals and objectives: the promotion and implementation of social and cultural activities that complement the lifelong formation of the individual, taking shape in various thematic areas and lines of action that constitute its internal operational system through programmes and policies on social commitment that strengthen the University Social Responsibility. The POU understands social participation as a social “part” and a social “action”. This means being a participant in the top-

ics that interest both the university and society, a correspondence of mutual interests that satisfy the demands of both parties to achieve joint aims. It is a dynamic strategy related to the university's social dimension; it creates synergies that are capable of highlighting and implementing knowledge accumulated through the teaching and research experience both of the university itself and in conjunction with outside public and private bodies. This is a *modus operandi* for university participation/extension policy on a management model oriented to achieving stable, permanent programmes with content on social commitment, especially linked to the value and integral formation of the individual for responsible citizenship; in an innovative concept of "extension/participation", which means moving from the image of a university that exports to the outside world to one where a university interacts with the outside world. It contains two broad approaches:

- The cultural part develops the socio-anthropological concept of the term "culture" in two formative aspects:
- in its material dimension (cultural events provided to the POU's community and environment)
- in its intangible dimension (formation in student values, behaviours and attitudes as a complement to academic education).
- The social part contains formative and participatory dimensions in the relationship between the university and society (integral formation of the individual, social knowledge transfer, University Social Responsibility etc.).
- This philosophy is embodied in the development and growth of activities, programmes and projects on complementary education. These are provided according to the different lines of action that unite them, as follows:

Equality and Social Integration. With three specific sub-areas: the value of equality (The Office of Equality) and two priority groups on care in a welfare society (the Open Classroom for the Elderly Programme, and the Service to Assist with Functional Diversity).

- Cultural Extension. Comprising the following sub-areas and lines of action: Cultural Activities and University Student Workshops (whose Spanish acronym is ACTUA) and Cultural Agenda.
- A transversal line of action that addresses issues on participation and social intervention and formation in values through the Volunteering Classroom/Office and the undertaking of studies on solidarity at the universities of Andalusia and its surroundings through the Andalusian Observatory on University Volunteering.
- Integral Health and Environment. Responding to content arising in the Social Responsibility of the university.

This is how the idea of creating a line of action on integral health and the environment arose in the POU's university policy. Definition of the lines of action was the first requirement, with the intention of clarifying that the proposal was not about "occupational risks". Therefore, the first task to be carried out was the design of the content and organisational chart of the VROSP and, in tandem, this line of action with regard to health promotion. Specifically, the line of Integral Health and Environment aimed to make the university community aware of the value of health and care as well as to help create a healthy university. Its functions and activities took the form of: 1) Formation and awareness, 2) Collaborations and intervention, 3) Study and research and 4) Formation of students undertaking internships.

The line of Integral Health and Environment works along with the university community regarding healthy habits in health prevention and promotion, as well as environmental aspects that also influence the sense of feeling well, caring well and living well, for the attainment of a university and a society that are truly committed to the responsibility for healthy living and the principles of sustainability and quality of life agreed in different international spheres. This area develops programmes that address the promotion of healthy living in accordance with the regulatory scope of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia. Law 2/1998, of June 15, on Health in Andalusia states in Article 2 that actions on health protection should be inspired by the principles of the integral conception of health, including those involving promotion, healthcare education and education for health, prevention, care and rehabilitation, with particular focus on personal care on the understanding that this impacts positively on the university. In addition, the POU has researchers and health professionals collaborating and/or proposing activities that disseminate their progress in research in a line that transfers knowledge to society about topics where attention is required. These include: Alzheimer's disease, stress and its consequences or other aspects that affect the quality of life and performance of people in all sectors.

The promotion of healthy habits, the interest in well-targeted nutrition, psychological advice, the promotion of knowledge and responsibility for one's own body, drug use and other addictive behaviours etc. were all topics suggested as lines of action in this area. They were developed with specific activities such as the Yoga Workshop for the knowledge and practice of body-mind relationship and the Personal Growth Workshops (sexuality, masculinities, eating disorders) such as the Integral Psychological Counselling Sessions (whose acronym in Spanish is SAPI) as a space for guidance, counselling, growth and personal improvement that were provided to all levels of the POU.

An example of a formative activity that combined issues on health, disability, care and solidarity-based values was the Conference on Spinal Mus-

cular Atrophy⁶ (SMA), the origin of which was a request made to the university by patients and relatives of children with this disease. The interest for those affected lay in knowing “what is happening to them” in scientific language that is familiar, accessible and intelligible to the public. This offered support to National Government Organisations and conducting “social knowledge transfer” activities that responded to the needs of individuals and social groups. Examples of this were the initiatives carried out in support of the aims of the Spanish Muscular Atrophy Foundation (FundAme in Spanish), which were launched in Catalonia; the search for the sponsorship of public and private entities that fostered research; the requirement of volunteering to achieve the Foundation’s aims (specifically, it sought to create an association based in Andalusia); as well as donations and occasional contributions with tax relief. In the Course on Spinal Medullary Atrophy, a genetics professor from the POU affected by the disease gave the opening lecture. There was also a round table with doctors and specialists of different levels and a practical workshop with a specialised physiotherapist. Those attending comprised students from all the POU’s degree courses and families of those affected by this disease. The activity was rated very positively.

Through these activities, some people talked of their discovery of other realities that they had not experienced before (awareness): reflection on the need for mutual assistance (solidarity); linkage to the attainment of goals (volunteering); concern for family support and how to help (commitment). Others complained of the neglect of economic and research interests, a lack of critical conscience, among others.

Some management experiences in health promotion⁷

Between 2008 and 2012, the Integral Health and Environment line gave rise to a number of programmes, which were offered to the entire university community and to society in general. Management and coordination of all the activities was the responsibility of the VROSP in conjunction with the proposing professor or collaborator, as well as the participation and funding of other entities beyond the university such as associations, companies or the administration of the Andalusian Regional Government itself. The formats were varied: workshops, conferences, courses, recreational activities, commemorations, research, participation in networks and others. All grant-

⁶ Course on Spinal Medullary Atrophy (25/11/2009), a free course with one free configuration credit and aimed, like the others, at the entire university community (teaching and research staff, administration and service staff, and students) and the interested public.

⁷ All reports on VROSP activities of the period 2007-2012 are published in the Unit of Social and Cultural Promotion, at <http://www.upo.es/upsc>.

ed Free Configuration Eurocredit recognition computed in the Academic Record. Here are some examples:

Commemorations: World Health Day: highlighting the knowledge acquired by participants through stands and workshops on health-related topics. World AIDS Day: providing very useful information for avoiding the HIV virus and other sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis, gonorrhoea, hepatitis etc.

Conferences on Healthy Habits Editions I-V: formative activity based on four pillars: Nutrition, Drugs and Addictions, Health, and Alternative Therapies, that promotes in a practical way actions for incorporating healthy habits into daily life. In the programme, which enjoyed the participation of the Deputy Director of Public Health and Citizen Participation of the Andalusian Regional Ministry of Health, a number of talks were held. These included “The right nutrition, a very healthy habit”, “Health, Society, Education: the frame of reference for healthy habits”, “Sexual-affective education: promoting healthy habits from the perspective of Health Education”, “Meditate to live a full life”, “The limits to conventional therapy” and “Analysis of reality, prevalence of eating disorders, possible solutions”. There were also round tables of researchers and professionals from different fields, entitled “Mediterranean Diet, Intangible Heritage of Humanity”, “Youth: healthy habits and risk factors”, together with simultaneous workshops such as “Sonotherapy and Relaxation”, “Basic notions of meditation” and “Laughter therapy” among others.

These activities were developed on the basis of public health criteria, healthy habits related to the prevention and health promotion as well as the environmental aspects that also influence health in one way or another, citizens’ feelings of well-being and quality of life. With this aim in mind, topics relating to individual aspects were addressed (eating habits, posture problems, addictive substances such as tobacco etc.) as well as others that involve an overall treatment of the city (pollution, food, drinking water, animals etc.). Possessing a transversal nature, there was continuous analysis of aspects as important as the interest of institutional and interdisciplinary cooperation, inequalities in health and the need for information, communication and education in health. For example, companies and banks displayed interest in collaborating not only through funding: the Oleostepa company set up a training module at the POU on the healthy qualities of olive oil while the Bankinter bank gave its employees the chance to participate in environmental volunteering activities in a POU programme.

Mediators in Nutrition (First, Second and Third Conferences and Courses): Basic knowledge was provided for awareness-raising activities and campaigns on nutrition. Aimed at educating the university community to become health mediators, fostering volunteering in nutrition, creating a vol-

unteer group at the university to raise awareness in the university community and the general public about the importance of a healthy diet. The topics discussed were 1) Nutritional education at different ages; 2) Creation of Nutritional Education Projects; 3) Healthy Eating Habits and Food Myths; 4) Culinary Technology.

Educational Courses: “Youth Mediators in health education and healthy lifestyle habits”⁸ addressed information, education and intervention of young people through their leadership as protagonists of their own health. Young mediators were educated to transmit this information to other adolescents and young people at schools, youth associations, recreational areas and leisure time outside the POU. This potential enables them to gain in confidence and deal with issues differently than is done in families or at the educational institution: drugs or other addictions, eating problems, unwanted pregnancies and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, road accidents, the approach to and knowledge of new diseases and their management and a long etcetera. Schools, associations, youth organisations and universities need to act and intervene because the social cost of ignoring health problems is considerable.

Educational courses for young people on “Social mediation, education and prevention of drug dependency and addictions”⁹. Activities of varying nature: informative, expository, educational, investigative and preventative with regard to drug dependency and addiction (study on awareness and trends in the university population, talks, advertising on partitions, notice boards located in cafeterias etc.) coexisted with courses in the form of talks, lectures, round tables on personal experiences, and practical workshops with relevant speakers on the topic of drug dependency and addictions. Given by 18 professors, researchers and specialists in the field, the titles included: “Drug Dependency and Addictions: A critical view”, “The predictors of drug use in adolescence”, “Education’ as a tool in the prevention of drug dependency and addictions”, “Drugs and Addictions: the regulatory framework”, “Addictions: risk and prevention. The case of tobacco”, “European experiences in drug dependency prevention”, “Drug problems: between health and education”, “Developing social skills as a mediator”.

Series of lectures on drugs and addictions: “Drugs in society”¹⁰. Various editions and formats were employed together with an informative stand on

⁸ In collaboration with the Andalusian Institute for Youth. Regional Ministry for Equality and Social Welfare of the Regional Government of Andalusia.

⁹ This course completes and broadens the actions contained in the Collaboration Agreement between the Ministry for Equality and Social Welfare of the Regional Government of Andalusia and the POU in the area of Drug Dependency and Addictions (signed in 2006 and extended in 2009)

¹⁰ In collaboration with the Directorate-General of Social Services and Care for Drug Dependency (Ministry for Equality and Social Welfare of the Regional Government of Andalu-

drug dependency and addictions- Conference on Drug Dependency and Addictions (Editions I-III). In commemoration of World No Tobacco Day and the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking, these sessions included lectures offered by specialists in the topic and a workshop where students designed Alternative Leisure Campaigns by distributing related materials and gathering the concerns and proposals of the university community on this topic. The methodology used for this dynamic was based on designing a large poster on a cork notice board with the following motto: "Drugs... what do you think?" divided into sections bearing the following statements: Reasons for Use, Advantages of Use, Disadvantages of Use, Alternatives to Use and What proposals would you like to see from the University to address awareness and prevention of Drug Dependency and Addiction?. These sessions saw the young participants suggest that the drug use is conditional on the social context in which the individual is to be found, as well as by the influence of personal factors such as low self-esteem and lack of social skills. With regard to alternatives, the university community placed considerable emphasis on encouraging healthier lifestyles, characterised by playing sport and devoting leisure and free time to healthy activities.

Awareness Campaign on Accident Prevention: ROAD SHOW.¹¹ The main objective of the activity was to prevent and raise awareness of road accidents and to influence the way young people drive. They are the ones most at risk of having a traffic accident, resulting in problems for families who have to deal with injuries and disabilities (Zambrano & Rivera, 2000, p.66).

Real-life accounts by those who have experienced these situations were included: road accident victims, emergency services, the police etc. The Road Show re-created the night of a young man that began in a club and ended with an accident. This was interspersed with impactful audiovisuals showing distressing images of road accidents, as well as reports on related experiences. Most participants said the show had affected them and agreed that it was an effective instrument for reflection, awareness and prevention of road accidents. Initiatives like the Road Show were proposed to target the entire population in general and especially schools and high schools. Various associations and foundations involved in preventing this problem participated with information and advice stands: the Aesleme Association, an association devoted to the study of Spinal Cord Injury; the Indace Foundation, which seeks the integration of those affected by Acquired Brain Damage; the Mobility Circuit of the University of Seville; the Regional Ministry of Health of the Regional Government of Andalusia; the RACC Foundation, which aims to promote sustainable mobility by conducting studies, campaigns and

sia) and the participation of the Universities of Huelva, Seville, Murcia among others.

¹¹ Initiative of the Regional Ministry of Health of the Regional Government of Andalusia, in collaboration with the VROSP of the POU.

educational and advisory activities; the Stop-Accidents Association, which works to provide Assistance and Guidance to those Affected by Road Accidents.

These activities provided by the VROSP in its four lines (which were sometimes combined due to the topic's transversal nature) gave students credits (a maximum of 6) for participating in "Health and Environmental Promotion Activities"; "Health Education Projects, Environmental Education and Environmental Volunteering" and "Participation in formative activities". Students also received credits applied to permanent programmes such as: Accompaniment of the hospitalised elderly; Leisure and free time with those who are drug dependent; Workshops in Secondary Schools for health promotion; Accompaniment of students with disabilities or transitional situations due to illness (accompaniment and support in classes and/or support in other leisure, sporting, cultural and social activities) or participation in the course on The Importance of blood donations.

Credits were also received for Practical Activities in health promotion, education and environmental volunteering, organised, co-organised or in collaboration with other entities. These were endorsed by a collaboration agreement and supervised by someone appointed by the POU for this purpose.

The impact abroad

The POU's development of University Social Responsibility and its activities led to the establishing of permanent interaction with the administration of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia and other entities (banks, associations, hospitals), other universities, the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) and others. The POU gained international exposure with the creation of the UNESCO Professorial Chair "Participation, culture and university commitment" in 2009. This encouraged personalities and institutions to participate in developing joint "socially responsible knowledge transfer" projects in order to generate synergies in a horizontal perspective of co-responsibility. Its singularity lay in the fact that it was an institutional proposal, not an individual one. It meant that the POU was in tune with the idea of social participation, creation of cultures and emerging university responsibility in the society of its time.

All these activities gave rise to grants for the university, collaboration in joint projects with a number of public and private entities and an inter-institutional presence through signed agreements and participation in networks (Spanish Network of Healthy Universities (REUS)¹², Andalusian Network of

¹² <https://www.unisaludables.es>

Health Promoting Universities (RAUS)¹³, EuroHPU Health Promoting Universities¹⁴ and UNITWIN/UNESCO¹⁵).

Within their responsibility, universities are where knowledge is built. This is an essential base when applied to issues that society regards with high concern and wants resolving (Pérez de Maza, 2007, p. 31). The answers can no longer come from the various authorities without the assistance of highly-qualified, specialised knowledge of a scientific nature and responsibility. Universities cannot avoid a commitment to raising awareness of the realities they detect. They must connect the knowledge with the society that needs it through accessible dissemination and its responsible application and, in the exercise of that responsibility, also create confidence in its contributions and social interventions.

On the path to healthy universities, we should examine a piece of history about the health promotion in this context. At State level, the Ministry responsible for health promotion and education created the “Health Promotion Work Group”, which was born out of the Public Health Commission. Starting work as early as 2000, its goal was to “delve into this topic and set strategies for quality improvement in health promotion and education”. From here, a number of international, national or regional initiatives have been developed.

In 2003, the First International Congress of Health Promoting Universities was organised by Chile’s Catholic University and Canada’s University of Alberta. February 2007 saw the holding of the National Conference, whose conclusions were applied in Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Continuous Education. Also in 2007, under the new government of the POU, the VROSP proposed to the Rector the initiation of a line of action on Integral Health and Environment of a formative nature. This was to be transversal and complementary within the guideline of integral education and/or continuous education; it would differ explicitly from the health care provided by various university services such as the Occupational Risk Prevention Unit. In its line of action on Integral Health and Environment, the VROSP of the POU began its health promotion programme in the 2007-2008 academic year and put it into practice during this period. Work was carried out on various topics and was warmly received. All this interacted with other universities, both regional and national, to set common strategies in health promotion in universities, and participate in different networks to work and share experiences, such as the Spanish Network of Healthy Universities (REUS) and the Andalusian Network of Health Promoting Universities (RAUS). The principles,

¹³ <http://www.saludpublicaandalucia.es/nuestro-trabajo/promocion-de-la-salud/red-andaluza-de-universidades-promotoras-de-salud>

¹⁴ <https://www.capfoods.aau.dk/Kindergarten+&+schools/eurohpu/>

¹⁵ <https://en.unesco.org/unitwin-unesco-chairs-programme>

aims and structure of the REUS appeared in its charter in September 2008: it comprised 21 universities (seven from Andalusia) and the Public Health structures of the following Autonomous Communities: Andalusia, Catalonia, Navarra, La Rioja, Madrid and Murcia.

The following year, the RAUS was founded with a view to expediting joint projects between the universities and the administration while continuing under the aegis of REUS. Also in 2009, the Fourth International Congress of Health Promoting Universities in Navarra was the starting point for 41 universities around the world to agree and sign a document entitled The Pamplona/Iruña Declaration. This had three important sections: 1) universities and health promotion; 2) health promotion through networking and 3) the challenges of health promoting, sustainable and responsible universities for the 21st century. Similarly, the Public University of Navarra produced a Healthy University Plan that represented a permanent cooperation agreement between the university and the Regional Department of the Regional Government of Navarra (the equivalent of the Regional Ministry of Health in the Andalusian Government). In 2008 and 2009, the First and Second RAUS Conferences took place in Seville and Huelva, respectively.

In 2010, the General Technical Secretariat of the RAUS was created, this being the responsibility of the POU from 2010-12. In November 2010, at a meeting of CRUE, a working group was created within this Sectoral Commission entitled "Healthy University".

Between 2007 and 2012, initiatives promoting healthy universities were developed at national level (REUS), at Autonomous Regional level (RAUS) and international level (EuroHPU and the UNESCO Chair).

Following its appearance at national level, the REUS became consolidated. In 2011, the Fifth REUS Meeting took place at the Ministry of Health, Social Policy, and Equality (MSPSI in Spanish) where reference was made to the Fourth Congress of Health Promoting Universities, held in Pamplona on 7-10 September 2009. It noted that the network had grown over the period, in terms of the number of both universities and Public Health structures of different Autonomous Communities as well as with the adherence of the Ministry of Education (ME) and the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE). The CRUE-ME-MSPSI Framework Agreement and its capabilities signified institutional support for the REUS that helped it to become consolidated, stable and continuous by providing a formal framework for it to operate, and a greater stability due to the fact that the universities approved their membership of the network through their Governing Boards. It was important that the REUS was present on the political agenda of the institutions, through its periodic appearance on the agenda of the CRUE, the ME and the MSPSI.

Also of note was the creation of healthy university networks in Autonomous Communities. The presentation of the RAUS, a constitutive meeting of the Madrid Networks of Healthy Universities (REMUS), and the presentation of the Catalan Network at the University of Girona were held that year. There was also the network's relationship with Europe, which was a goal of the Pamplona Congress, and the creation of the European network (EuroHPU). Meanwhile, the CRUE-ME-MSPSI Framework Agreement proved to be an institutional vehicle for the establishment and strengthening of these networks, as well as providing the social and temporal projection of the REUS. There was also the following meeting of the RIUPS (Ibero-American Network of Health Promoting Universities) and the Fifth International Congress of Health Promoting Universities. Moreover, contact has been established with other networks or institutions such as the ENAS (European Network of Academic Sport Services), the Higher Sports Council and the Spanish Association Against Cancer (AECC). With regard to work groups, the projects and the directors of REUS in each university, the new universities were invited to incorporate them. In addition to specific projects, there was a need to move towards a Healthy Universities Plan with a document of minimum joint proposals from a point of view that was more practical than theoretical. The work groups and tasks in REUS were:

- Group I (Structure and Operation): the importance of references to the REUS in the Strategic Plans of the different universities and the relevance of strengthening the REUS with the networks of the Autonomous Regions.
- Group II (Environments, Services and Activities): six thematic areas, four of them referring to health more specifically, a fifth on the environment and sustainable development and the sixth on Equality.
- Group III (Study Plans, Education and Research): each university to study reports on its degree courses and analyse its health research.
- Group IV (Participation): on the importance of developing a Healthy University Plan. The Public University of Navarra does possess a Healthy University Plan; it has assessed the first Plan (2005-2010) and developed the second Healthy Universities Plan (2011-2015).
- At the same time, there was encouragement for the public presence of the REUS and the presentation of the resulting activities at Autonomous Community and university level; the creation of a REUS website and establishment of an annual Work Plan: the proposal for a forthcoming meeting of the RIUPS in Costa Rica (the Fifth International Congress of Health Promoting Universities¹⁶); at an informal international meeting of

¹⁶ <https://costarica.campusvirtualsp.org/congreso-internacional-de-universidades-promotoras-de-la-salud-comunidades-universitarias>

Healthy Universities in Geneva it was proposed to work in the European Network of Healthy Universities (an active relationship between 11 countries, including three national networks, the German, the English and the Spanish. The Network gave rise to EuroHPU (Health Promoting Universities), which studied the issues emerged from the work conducted on social inequalities in health during the Spanish EU Presidency in 2010.

At Autonomous regional level, the RAUS is a network comprising all the Andalusian universities and the Regional Ministry of Health. It was definitively created in 2010 with the Rector's requisite signature of adherence and had the following aims: 1) to provide the university educational process with a health promotion profile 2) to incorporate all university levels and 3) to empower the university as a promoter of health in its social environment

The activities organised within the Integral Health-POU (related to awareness, education, mediation, participation, research, studies and assessment) were included in the network with highly useful and gratifying results.

The POU was chosen to take charge of the RAUS General Technical Secretariat for the 2010-2012 period. Project development was assigned to the VROSP and this followed the line of action of Integral Health and Environment. Its initial action was to encourage the involvement of the Andalusian university governing teams. The objective consisted in obtaining the signature of the RAUS universities on the document that reflected the framework of action in health promotion at regional level.

The purpose of this period was to consolidate the network, encourage team work, enable work sessions-meetings in which important topics were shared in order to develop actions on health promotion.

The project's implementation consisted of creating a working commission comprising members of the General Technical Secretariat-RAUS and the Regional Ministry of Health, with the priority issues and demands of the Andalusian universities set forth in the minutes.

The results took the form of proposals such as the creation of a RAUS website and an annual report for presenting the activities undertaken by the universities on health promotion (those subsidised by the Regional Ministry of Health and by other entities) and creating a health information point at the universities.

The first action under the POU consisted of holding of the Third Conference and Meeting of the Andalusian Network of Health Promoting Universities¹⁷. This complied with the aims of the project presented to the open call for subsidies from the Regional Ministry of Health referred to above and in the 2009 Declaration:

¹⁷ The inaugural institutional lecture was "Health promotion at universities", given by the Rector Magnificus of the POU, Juan Jiménez Martínez, on 30 November 2010 at the POU.

“... so that the University may adequately and efficiently attend to the demands that society requires of it, it must seek a physical, psychologically and socially healthy, supportive, sustainable and quality context that enables it, in compliance with its social obligations, to incorporate health promotion in formative curricula and among research aims, as well as offering various programmes to promote the creation of a culture and healthy working and study conditions, motivating the participation of people and social networks in programming, attainment and dissemination of accomplishments”. Pamplona/Iruña Declaration of October 2009.

This first session represented a direct channel of group communication between the universities and the Secretariat that became a forum for work between technicians. The diversity and interest in the work portfolios of each of the Andalusian universities led to a proposal to hold meetings of technical personnel to manage the actions and measures worked on during the sessions. This gave rise to the First Inter-University Technicians’ Meeting, which was held on 12 May 2011 at the POU. That same year, the RAUS and the Regional Ministry of Health were set a joint challenge: to address the network’s new stage by working synergically on topics and fields of action that were being undertaken in most of the universities. One of the difficulties was to maintain the involvement of the universities at such austere times. Nevertheless, the “Million Steps” project was launched and the POU was deemed to be a “Health Promotion Space” by the World Health Organisation.

The second session took the form of the Second Inter-University Technicians Meeting, which addressed resource-saving guidelines and measures on actions that were to be maintained the following year, such as the presentation of the report on the activities of each university. This led to more regular meetings of the working commission (POU and the Regional Health Ministry) in order to optimise the management of the RAUS at a time of economic crisis. The Andalusian regional elections took place in this period, which had an influence on the preparation and holding of the Fourth RAUS Conference “The University, a healthy organisation”.¹⁸

A final reflection on accomplishments and fresh challenges

From the results of all the initiatives related to the health promotion training in higher education and taking on board the recommendations of the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA), we believe that the educational field should take the following into account:

¹⁸ Held on 28 March 2012 at the POU, this included Carmen Gallardo, honorary patron of health promotion at national level. She highlighted the Healthy University project in the inaugural lecture.

- Theoretical bases of health promotion in the subjects taught.
- Biopsychosocial aspects of health/disease processes.
- Preparation and undertaking of interventions in health promotion.

In its role on health promotion through the different formats of action, the VROSP of the POU entertained the basic idea of breaking the health/disease nexus. Therefore, it proposed the creation of a culture of health and self-care as well as the understanding of “health” as a value in itself, as a state of well-being, which is beneficial for the individual and for the society. This explains why the line of action was named *Integral Health and Environment*, consciously connecting the individual and the environment, the individual and society. The idea proposed with regard to *integral health* contained:

- At individual (microsociological) level, the examination of physical, mental, emotional, social, environmental and even, to a certain extent, spiritual aspects. Thus, health promotion would involve the creation and development of a “culture of individual responsibility in self-care” (internalisation of a health culture).
- At social (macrosociological) level, the above relates and impacts on the importance of the sustainability of a system concerned with health/disease care (economic system, educational system, political-administrative system etc.).
- Finally, at intra-university (mesosociological) level, we consider the commitment to health promotion to possess an unquestionable significance and importance as content of University Social Responsibility and the integral formation of the individual (university policy).
- With the POU being a member of the REUS, of the RAUS and of the CRUE’s “*Healthy University*” working group, the General Technical Secretariat had tasks and proposals that remained to be done. The work sessions gave rise to a RAUS General Secretariat work plan, which was subject to assessment by both the universities comprising the RAUS and the office of the Regional Ministry of Health and other Andalusian Government ministries to establish programmes with the environment: health promotion in local government offices, town councils, classrooms for the elderly, schools for parents, secondary schools, and even companies involving students in health promotion projects.

In conclusion, the socio-cultural dimension of health and its promotion at the POU at the institutional level was lost in 2013. However, some people have continued this line at professorial level¹⁹ with proposals related to the current interest in higher education overall, in national models and the

¹⁹ Some female professors from the Department of Sociology have maintained interest and action in the topics of health and healthy universities despite the institution’s withdrawal in 2013 following the arrival of a new governing team.

EHEA. The new manner of understanding health and disease has produced a proliferation of Research Institutes and Specialisation Courses and Masters' Degrees in the past 30 years in the United States and some European universities. Currently, fields of knowledge such as neuroscience, quantum physics or sociology are also encharged with understanding health and disease differently. This is based on advances in their research and various studies that identify three objectives in improving health: a) increased participation of the patients in their own care, b) improvement of the population's health, c) cost control per patient.

The POU has continued to work on this through professors involved in different courses and activities that stemmed from a sociological definition of health and disease, as well as the political-institutional dimension of health. An example of this was the "*Medicalisation in daily life*"²⁰ seminar or the University Expert Course "*Expert in the social dimension of health, personal well-being and self-care*", with the main goal being to complete training in knowledge and debate on Europe's current health issues (Ramírez, Martínez & Márquez, 2017, p. 526)²¹. This study also presented new trends in complementary and alternative medicine among the population.

It could be said that the interest shown by the POU's governing team and public institutions in health promotion over the time has proved important, as it was the interaction with other universities to improve strategies that set common objectives, together with the growing support of a number of private entities.

Finally, from experience and, broadly, as a common line for the promotion of health at university, the remaining work would be: to set general and specific common aims at universities, to develop structures that turn these aims into specific actions and to analyse the most appropriate methodologies to reach the extra-mural society that appreciates and acknowledges this. The Accesit Prize bestowed in the educational field by the Ministry of Health of the Regional Government of Andalusia to the POU programme "Eat, Walk and Live" was a good example of health promotion in the university context.

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²⁰ Seminar at the POU in 2012 organised and coordinated by the professors, Drs Rosalía Martínez and Antonia Ramírez, on "*Medicalisation in daily life*" as part of the "The POU for All" Programme.

²¹ Academic directors: Antonia Ramírez and Rosalía Martínez. Offer of Internal Degrees by the POU (2013).

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