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Young people without family references in the migration contexts and creative expressions: challenges and opportunities[1].

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The new global dynamics have led to a number of changes in the contemporary societies. Rapid technological development in recent years has given way to a third industrial revolution, the "information age" (Castells, 1997), characterized by the influence of state-of-the-art information technologies and communication in social, economic, cultural and political relations. Similarly, we are also witnessing times characterized by a growing instability, where uncertainty and threads have become keywords for understanding the new global relations, which has been defined by Beck (2002) as a risk society. This context leads unavoidably to think of youth as a group especially sensitive to the consequences of these changes.

Youth is an extremely important stage in which young people progressively live a great many incomprehensible new experiences. These experiences are related to the construction of their identities as well as to the search of a space, a place in the world, a road that in most of the cases is not free from tensions and contradictions. As stated by Regina Novaes (2007:1), being young is to live the paradox between subordination to the family and to the society and, at the same time, having social emancipation expectations, some kind of social moratorium that gets worse through the real changes brought by globalization and the emerging risk society but also lived according to the specific contexts, marked by differences upon the social origin; by socio-economic inequalities, among others, that directly affect in the experience of youth as a training stage and, in many cases, places them in a vulnerable position of social exclusion risk.

In Latin America, for example, social inequalities can cause risk situations such as violence, drug taking, school drop-out, etc (CEPAL, 2007). Likewise, European youth is having difficulties in terms of full labour insertion and consequently for financial and social autonomy (EUROSTAT, 2009). Also, other reasons such as ethnic and/or political conflicts influence, in an especially alarming way, the integral development of young people, as it is happening in some African and Eastern countries. Nevertheless, the new global dynamics, especially those related to the appearance of the risk society, in their relation with the young people, state an important change of view referring to the youths attention to public policies, and the fact is that young people are not being considered as passive subjects but as active subjects, owners of potential rights and powers, i.e. as social change agents (González-Anleo and González-Anleo, 2008:163). In this regard, speaking about a risk situation in the youth also considers the exclusion from citizenship as an obstacle to overcome and an absolutely necessary fact for future of societies. It is a question of helping the young people in their way to obtaining their social, cultural and symbolic capital.

Given the above mentioned conditions, it is reasonable to wonder how is it possible to help the young people to assume the role of social change agent through their own pressures and contradictions that permeate their passage through youth. Without a doubt,

the answer to this question is not quite simple. To find it out it is important to delve into some other aspects that characterize today's youth, such as for example, the construction of their identity and their relation with society. This paper focuses on what have been called creative expressions. The first section introduces this concept and the possibilities to become a socio-educational tool. From this perspective some real experiences are analysed. The second section describes the situation of minors without family references and comments on the possibilities and challenges for implementing a socio-educative program based on creative expressions.

1. Creative Expressions as a socio-educational intervention tool

The common association between the appearance of the new post-modern societies and a growing identity crisis is not something new. Stuart Hall (2001), for example, has considered that the post-modern subject is characterized by keeping a decentralized and fragmented identity. The information age has not only favored the construction of hybrid identities (Garcia-Canclini, 2001, 2004a, 2004b) or transculturality (Welsh, 1999) but has also emphasized the local versus the global. Pam Nilan (2004), when speaking about young people, questions this issue by referring to ¨global youth cultures¨. In this work, she argues that youth sub-cultures as well as collective identities are a way that young people have found to react against a situation of ontological insecurity, in other words, to build their identity in an increasingly fragmented identity context. On one hand, if young people assume certain aspects of a global culture as their own, especially those related with the ¨creation of lifestyles¨ - fashion, music, dance, etc. – on the other they are prone to define themselves according to specific and/or local identity features, as may be religion, ethnic group, nationality and even social class. On this basis, it is easy to find young people wearing jeans, who like American music and eat in fast food restaurants such as McDonald´s, but at the same time, are categorical when defining themselves as non western Muslims, or French or Catalonian (Nilan, 2004).

Regarding this, the influence of new information and communication technologies can not be ignored in these processes of identity construction. The technological revolution in the last years has allowed a greater access to cultural expressions as well as a better diffusion, especially that of the mass culture. Likewise, the interactive character of new communication technologies has evidently provided the young people not only with the equipment but also with tools for creating, from this mass culture, other new cultural expressions in the search of the confirmation of this still incipient identity. The cultural industry has thus become an important cultural and social dialogue visibility representation. As stated by Hopenhayn (2003:183), ¨the communication industries are the most important gateways to public space for a broad variety of social groups that lack expression spaces and, accordingly, play an active role in the civic involvement¨. More and more young people are choosing to use the cyber space as a platform not only to mediate their experiences but also to build the experience as such, and so create an important resource for the design of socio-educational intervention programs. In fact, education literature emphasizes the importance of establishing a curricular approach more appropriate for the new times. This approach considers extremely important the need to provide them with a critical eye towards the means of communication, as well as training them in and throughout the universe of new information and communication

technologies (Area, 2005; 2004; Ferrés, 2004; Hopenhayn, 2003, 2006; Martín-Barbero, 1987, 2002, 2007, 2008).

Similarly, other authors speak about the need for young people to be stimulated in their creative capacity through arts as well as through cultural and creative expressions (Eisner, 2004; Greene, 2005). The point is to develop their imaginative capacity in order to improve the acquisition of the symbolic, social and cultural capital needed to fulfill a full citizenship.   If we assume that today's world is directly related with the conformation of more opened identities also respectful of diversity, the imaginative capacity is presented as a key element for the subject to be able to ¨sense the road towards other people's perspective or point of view¨ (Greene, 2005:64) and, consequently, to be capable of properly relating with the social environment, encouraging solidarity and participation. According to Eisner (2004:19) the work in arts is not only a way to create performances and products, but ¨a way to create our lives widening our conscience, shaping our attitudes, satisfying our search for meaning, establishing contact with the others and sharing a culture¨ Regarding this, Greene synthesis is that ¨today education must be conceived as a way to open the world to critical judgments of young people and their imaginative projections and, when the time comes, to their transforming actions ¨ (2005:92). In this sense, the creative expressions could be and must be used as a platform to generate social participation and transformation, especially in their environment or community.

In the same way, another important aspect to be taken into account is the ambiguous way in which society interacts with the youth. On one hand the young people are considered the future of society, assuming an important amount of expectations, but on the other they are seen from a negative mirror where are usually identified according to attributes such as immaturity, violence, etc., i.e., youth is characterized as ¨a difficult and problematic stage¨. As pointed out by Krauskopf (2000:126) ¨the fact of being young is generalized as a social problem, which provokes reactions of fear and rejection ¨. Besides, he stresses that if invisibility is not broken, young people could create a terrifying visibility, characterized by violent interactions, challenging appearances, etc., acting as a form of empowerment and affirmation mechanism against a situation of social devaluation. Without a doubt, this vision of the young people as a problem means an added difficulty for their socio-educational development and demands initiatives that consider and encourage their visibility in positive character: ¨positive visibility of adolescence recognizes the juvenile contribution to society supports a positive acceptance of the adolescent life and makes essential the effective participation¨ (Krauskopf, 2000:127).

In this direction, the use of creative expressions is presented as a good alternative for intervention in order to achieve this positive visibility. Some experiences implemented in Brazil, for example, have revealed that arts and some cultural expressions are powerful tools to develop new social mediators between the young people from Rio de Janeiro slums and the society, stimulating their civic participation and minimizing their negative stigmatization (refer to Durston, 2009; Ramos, 2006; Yúdice, 2001,2002).

Coming back to the above question, it could be said that the use of creative expressions, specially coming from new communication technologies, are presented as an educational

resource suitable for today's context. From the implementation of programs based in arts, cultural expressions and the new communication technologies, it is possible to stimulate the imaginative and creative capacity of young people, creating spaces that redirect the tensions and contradictions specific of the adolescence stage for their empowerment. Thereby these mechanisms, if well implemented, allow the young people to acquire the necessary competences for their personal development. The idea is to foster their creative capacity and critical autonomy in order to promote an autonomous subject aware of his role in the construction of a more cohesive, supportive and fair society.

Obviously, taking into account that although, in some way, young people share a similar global context, as already mentioned, the specific contexts are extremely important when stating and designing public policies and/or intervention programs directed to the young people. The youth experience is conditioned by social and personal situations that differ to each other according to certain contexts. It is not the same to be young in the suburbs of a urban area than in a middle class neighborhood, as it is not the same to be young in a foreign country, where the majority cultural codes are probably not the same as those of the birthplace. All these references echo in the possibilities to live adolescence with a better or worse integration and could even lead to more risks of social exclusion than others. Also, recalling Paulo Freire (1972), for education to be liberating, it must be established in the specific context of those to whom it is directed, so the individual, object of intervention, becomes the subject of learning, creating his/her own culture from himself/herself. That is, a culture that must be free and must be translated as action towards the achievement of the personal creativity.

In this regard, let's then go over some socio-educational intervention initiatives based in the creative expressions, in an attempt to picture their usefulness from different perspectives, approaches and social contexts.

1.2 Afro Reggae[2] Cultural Project: ¨Culture is our Weapon¨

As above mentioned, youth is usually perceived from a negative point of view. In some way, there is a widely spread practice which associates young people with violence, especially through the media. The picture of the suspicious teenager has been created and this has lead to important consequences for the social integration. Indeed, we cannot forget that young people, especially in contexts of social inequalities, are more vulnerable to the risk but that doesn't mean that they have to be considered as potential criminals. In fact, these dynamics progressively influence, in a very alarming way, their socio-educational development. As expressed by Krauskopf (2000:126) ¨those teenagers who feel themselves deprived from the positive recognition, when not being listened, when being devaluated, build the power and the identity when they see the face of fear in the others¨. Besides, Krauskopf points out that this way of perceiving teenagers has a boomerang effect where the control on social disturbance produced by young people is prioritized, without encouraging their development, solving the situations or recognizing their value as rights-bearing subjects and human capital.¨ (ibid.)

An example of these kinds of dynamics is found in a study carried out by Silvia Ramos (2006) with young people from Rio de Janeiro slums. Besides the terrible socio-

economic conditions they face, a limiting factor per se, they also live with the shadow of drug trafficking. In this regard, one of the main goals of the aforementioned study was to identify the personal motivations that led these young people to choose joining organized crime. The results of the investigation have considered that the lack of appropriate policies for the youth focused on improving their qualities as social change agents, to offer them other possibilities for work placement and to promote their positive visibility, was a determining factor for teenagers to join the drug trafficking. Under these conditions, boys and girls in Rio de Janeiro slums ended up seeing a seducing possibility of social climbing through drug trafficking. Besides, another conclusion of the study is related with the stigmatization of these young people as potential delinquents. The negative way in which young people are viewed would have two main consequences in this process. Both of them negative: on one side, it generates an atmosphere of rejection and social alarm by the society towards them, which means an added difficulty for their social integration; and, on the other side, stimulates their relation with violence as a way of self-affirmation in the context of social devaluation. At the same time, the State feeds back these contexts by focusing its policies from a control perspective, replacing what is supposed to be a policy of attention to the youth into a public security approach. As a conclusion, the study reveals that most of the teenagers who choose to join organized crime do it not only for a financial matter, but also for a question of visibility. The drug trafficking world seduces them because they perceive it as a possibility to be recognized as well as getting power and respect from the others.

According to this context, some socio-educational intervention projects have considered the use of cultural expressions as an effective tool to revert this process. In fact, it is considered a quite widespread practice in Brazil (Durston, 2009) that has also been supported in several studies that show excellent results (Durston, 2009; Ramos, 2006; Yúdice, 2001, 2002). This is also the case of the cultural project Afro Reggae. It was born in the Vigário Geral slum after a massacre in which 21 innocent people died; Afro Reggae has been concerned with working with young people at risk, especially those who are somehow closely related to drug trafficking. In this sense, one of the key ideas of the Project is, by means of the arts and cultural expressions, to provide the teenagers with skills that are useful not only in the personal and affective sphere, but also help them to get involved in the labor market, offering them an income alternative different from drug trafficking. (Durston, 2009:107). Besides using arts and cultural expressions as a way to generate social dialogue, these kinds of projects create new social mediators, which helps them to attract a positive visibility. As pointed out by Ramos (2006:422) ¨these groups express the ideas and perspectives of young people in the slums throughout different languages like music, theater, dance and cinema¨. At the same time, they seek to produce alternative images against criminality stereotypes associated with this part of the society and try to keep them away from drug trafficking, instead seducing them by the glamour of the arts, visibility and success.

Nevertheless, the success of the Afro Reggae Project cannot be reduced to a simple use of creative expressions in the intervention with young people, but provides a strategic vision to incorporate and gather these teenagers in a common project. Regarding this, most of the work proposals are related to the civic participation directed to the human rights, health prevention – AIDS, sexual-affective education, etc. – which helps to create

a feeling of belonging to a community, in this case to the project (Yúdice, 2001:57). With the slogan ¨Culture is our Weapon¨ Afro Reggae is a growing Project and a resounding sign of the creative expressions possibilities in the socio-educational intervention with young people at risk situation.

1.3 SIPAZ[3]: Peace Communication System

In a very similar line of work, the Peace Communication System carried out in Colombia is a project that is also related to creative expressions as social intervention tools. Nevertheless, this project is more concerned with the use of communication, specially associated to new information technologies. Its main goal is, by means of a network and a communication system, to restore the social balance in conflict areas, especially in the rural regions, encouraging and promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and respect (Castellanas, 2001). At present, the SIPAZ project gathers a network of 370 community broadcasting stations, 38 TV channels and 24 networks of community radio and television, all of them connecting the information coming from the regions, besides carrying out training and joint production processes under the idea of ¨improving the quality of the contents and bringing together a common agenda focused in the social, cultural and economical sustainability¨ (García and Zuleta, 2008:3).

Even though it is not a project exclusively focused in the youth, it considers vital to involve the young people in these activities. Not forgetting that the work is in areas of conflict and that in these conditions teenagers represent a preferential group when designing social intervention programs. This is illustrated by the Andaquí Communication Center which includes the Andaquí Radio station, Children Communication, Audiovisual and Radio School, library project, new communication and information technologies project, members of SIPAZ project and has as the main line of work the construction of spaces as well as the validation and recognition of social discourse that ¨promotes the insertion in the democratic life to residents, specially to children and teenagers from the southern Colombian region¨ (ibid.). Within this intervention proposal the Children Communication School stands out where, throughout workshops of radio and video production and the creation of communicative products focused on public, democratic and cultural issues, children and teenagers are stimulated to construct a social agenda out of the communication processes in this region (ibid).

The success of the Project is evidenced in the awards given by different organizations related to well-being and the defense of children and adolescents' rights. As a matter of fact, the Children Communication School of Belén de los Andaquíes has received the UNICEF award for the kids TV programs in Latin America (Castellanas, 2001). Therefore, the SIPAZ project is considered another interesting proposal of how creative expressions, in this case associated to the ICTs, could be used in the socio-educational intervention with teenagers at risk, mainly with a view to encourage their involvement and identification with the social environment and, thus, to promote their civic participation.

1.4 A minute for my rights: ¨imagine it, create it and share it¨

Through an alliance among UNICEF, European Cultural Foundation and Sandburg Institute, *The One Minutes Jr.* initiative was born in 2002. First spread in Europe, the project had the goal to create a platform for offering the youth a chance to express their rights by means of audio-visual language and the making of a 1 minute long videos[4]. The idea was that, by participating in video workshops, teenagers could be able to produce 1 minute long videos on topics related to their rights, experiences and demands, as part of the exercise of their participation right and to make their voice heard in the media and the general society. Thereby, this is a project based in the use of creative expressions linked to the new communication technologies where teenagers are encouraged to think about their role in society.

The Project consists of four stages throughout 10 months. At first, those in charge of its implementation a ¨local approach¨, by contacting organizations from the civil society in each location that will host the workshops and/or will support the implementation of the program. Then, citizen participation in the project is sought by means of cultural activities. The second stage is characterized by the promotion of a ¨facilitators' meetings¨. The idea here is to gather the persons that will deliver the workshops, who are usually community-related people with knowledge of the audio-visual language and experience in working with the youth. Afterwards, the next stage is the implementation of the workshops. Reflection focused on the rights and with training in the audio-visual language, the workshops last for a period of 4-5 months. Finally, the last stage is the exhibition of the short films produced by the teenagers and made in the workshops. The broadcasting means go from the official website of the project in the Internet to the festivals created specifically for this end, where young people go for awards.

Some of the specific goals of the project are to create spaces for informal learning, innovation and creativity; to stimulate the creation of networks, debate and discussion; to involve disadvantaged teenagers and give them the opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes; and to offer them a space and the appropriate tools to experience diversity insofar as referring to differences and similarities.

1.5 Video in the Villages[5]: ¨teaching culture of the other to the other¨

Finally, another example on the use of creative expressions as a tool for socio-educational intervention is the experience carried out among the indigenous villages of the Brazilian Amazonia. Created in 1987, the Video in the Villages project initially came up as a way to foster the organization process of Brazilian indigenous people in the fight for their territorial rights and in the search of their ethnic recognition. The idea was, from the use of audio-visual means, to stimulate the indigenous community to produce and watch their own image and also to promote the creation of a network that allowed the interchange of experiences among the different ethnic groups and collectives (Caixeta, 2004). In this direction, it is important to point out that the indigenous community in Brazil does not have a significant social status. To be specific, the indigenous people are treated as an almost invisible minority, which curiously seems not to exist. As stated by Carlos Fausto (2006:1), ¨The contemporary Brazilian society did not recover, but episodically, and indigenous past, contrary to countries like Mexico, Peru or Paraguay that did constitute their national identity by including this past, for its post-colonial

update¨. In fact, the author emphasizes that in Brazilian society there is an exclusion of the indigenous culture in the general idea of what national culture is: ¨most of the times, indigenous world appears as a mere residue¨ (ibid.).

In this sense, the Project was thought out within a context marked by a growing movement of ethnic identity reaffirmation of this communities. It started from the idea that today the indigenous groups' identities were disseminated rather than excluded, built from a fragmented tradition, and so in need of strengthening their autonomy, allowing them to be recognized and demarcated from the others in a collective identity. Thus, Video in the Villages was born as a project that intends to contribute to this movement, ¨making available to the indigenous people the opportunity of a dialogue adapted to their forms of cultural circulation. The goal was to make accessible the use of video to a growing number of indigenous communities, promoting the appropriation and handling of their image according to their political and cultural projects¨ (Gallois and Carelli, 1995:1-2).

As a socio-educational project, it is useful to highlight its direct link with communication and intercultural education. As stated by Nietta Lindenberg (2004:1), by means of contemporary resources such as video and television, the experience of the project, captured in the vast work accumulated throughout almost 23 years. It shows the possibilities of intercultural communication among the different peoples and the socio-educational use of indigenous languages and cultures for their validation and broadcasting. Moreover, it is a clear example of how the use of creative expressions could help in educational intercultural processes since, quoting the author, it ¨expresses in an exemplary fashion, interdisciplinary educational processes– by articulating different types of knowledge – and intercultural educational processes – by encouraging the informed relation among differentiated peoples (Lindenberg, 2004:2)

2. Creative expressions in socio-educational intervention with young people without family references in the migration context: an opportunity?

Thus far, we have talked about youth and the challenges they face on the road to adulthood: the tensions and contradictions that young people are exposed to, during the complex processes such as the construction of their identity, the search of their place in the world, at the time when instability and uncertainty are central terms to understand the new dynamics that characterize our contemporary society. We have also talked about how these young people relate to this society that wants to protect them, while requires from them an active behavior, that associates them with the future, but at the same time connects them with conflicting and antisocial attitudes. In this context, adolescents find themselves at a crossroads and the society has to help them to choose which path to take; a path that lead them to a critical autonomy, a path that would change them into full and independent citizens.

In this regard, we also refer to the urgent need for the education to be reshaped and updated. We need to seek new resources to make it coherent with these new times, in which information and knowledge are keywords to fully develop and become an autonomous individual. Therefore, the use of new educational resources related to creativity and imagination and also to new communication technologies, becomes not

only an interesting possibility, but in a way, an essential one. Indeed, some examples of initiatives based on these premises, demonstrate the efficiency of these resources in the integral formation of young people, not only as active citizens, but also as agents of social change on both levels: outside, regarding the transformation of the society, and inside, that is, in the personal development.

However, the use of these resources should be acknowledged to the specific background of these young people. It starts form the premise that young people's experience is influenced by the differences that define to a greater or a lesser degree the challenges and the opportunities that young people face during this process. In this regard, while some may consider crime and violence as a means to achieve social visibility, others may think of migration as a way to achieve social emancipation. This is precisely one of the new phenomena that have powered new global dynamics. There are more and more young people that are embarking on a migration project without the company of their families: the so-called minor and young migrants without family references[6]. In fact, just as in the case of Rio de Janeiro slums, where young people consider getting involved in drug trafficking as a kind of passage to adulthood, as pointed out by Liliana Suarez (2006:33), similarly, migration is considered by youth as a rite of passage, a way to achieve power to make their own decisions and gain independence.

Therefore, the emergence of minor and young migrants without family references coincides with the changes generated by globalization. However, it should be noted that although it is true that the technological revolution has promoted an increase in migration flows, migration is not considered as a novelty in itself. Human beings have always moved across continents, driven by a variety of reasons: economic, political, environmental, etc. and one could even say that this is our inherent characteristic. However, minor and young migrants without family references are regarded as a new phenomenon because they put the emphasis on the role of youth as a new migration actor.

In this sense, it is clear that this is an alarming phenomenon due to the fact that they are adolescents that are still 'under development', and should therefore be assisted by their parents, attend school and, in one word, develop in order to become autonomous and critical citizens. However, we cannot ignore that there are certain contexts that influence the decision of young people to undertake a migration project, many of them related to violence that can be structural, political or symbolic. Faced with the prospect of being forced to fight, such as in the ethnic conflicts in Africa, or in light of the seductive possibility of European and American dream, thousands of minors and young people choose to leave their countries of origin for unknown worlds, with the desire to find better opportunities, even if it means having to leave their families. Thus, they assume the status of unaccompanied refugees or immigrants, a status that has lately been devalued given the current asylum and immigration policies, and come to be considered a problem by the governments of host societies, following the logic that was previously commented: the vision of youth as a social problem.

Therefore, even if these young people are from other countries or continents, with other cultural codes, with different ways to understand the world around them, they are nothing but teenagers, though diverse and different, but that live the same contradictions

and tensions characteristic of their peers. Although with the added difficulty of the fact that they are far from their families, often in a country, whose language is unknown to them that implies a special situation of vulnerability. Thus, it is necessary to think about alternatives, especially those connected with the social and educational interventions that would take into account these specific contexts, but would also be able to help them in the difficult process of being "the other". Regarding this, the use of creative expressions seems to be an interesting resource. We have seen how their implementation has been positive in different contexts of vulnerability and has also proved to be effective as a platform to enhance the necessary skills that help young people develop into agents of social change. In this sense, the posed question is "whether the creative expressions in the intervention with youth in the context of migration could be a positive opportunity in their integration process. How and/or in which aspects?"

Before giving way to this reflection, it is necessary to know more about this new migratory actor, his/her needs, difficulties, the reasons that motivated the migration, that is, outline his/her profile so that it would be possible to think about the possibilities and challenges that come along with the use of creative expressions as an intervention tool.
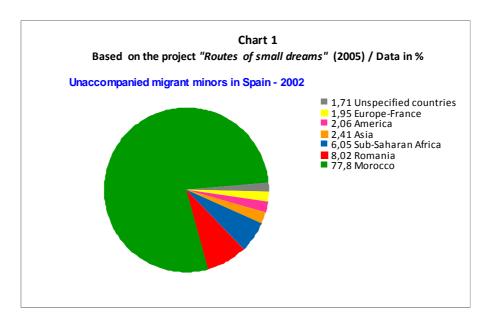
2.1 A new migratory actor

According to the definition given by ACNUR, minor and young migrants without family references, are children or adolescents under 18 who are outside their country of origin and separated from both parents or from the person that by law or custom was in charge of them. Some of these children are totally alone, while others live with their relatives. They may have applied for asylum for fear of persecution, lack of protection from human rights violations, armed conflicts and/or serious disorders in their country of origin. Others may have been victims of trafficking or other types of exploitation, or may have traveled to Europe to escape situations of severe poverty. Many of them faced terrible experiences and survived circumstances of extreme hardship (ACNUR, 1997).

In Spain, the majority of unaccompanied migrant children are from Maghreb (mostly Moroccan), followed by Romania and sub-Saharan Africa (see Chart 1). As pointed out by Mercedes Jimenez (2004, 2003) and Liliana Suarez (2004), this is a new phenomenon that should be framed within the logic of international migration and has a number of challenges not only for government administrations of host countries, but also for these teenagers, who see migration as an opportunity to improve their own and their families' living conditions or even as an unique chance to escape a violent situation. Indeed, the author mentions that we are experiencing a new stage of the Moroccan migration process, characterized by the prominence of young population (ibid.).

The reasons that lead a teenager to undertake a migration project are many and varied, but all are the fruit of social inequality and violence that can be structural, political or symbolic. One of the factors that influence this process is closely connected to the lack of resources and acceptable social and economic conditions in the country of origin: the lack of income and poverty make migration be seen as a real possibility of improving living conditions. Another factor, that is to some extent related to the first one, has to do with the precarious situation of child protection in Spain, which currently is unable to provide answers to the manifestations of poverty in both cities and rural areas.

Finally, the third factor is related to the social archetypes of immigration in the common belief, which promotes the idea that immigration is a (or the only) way to improve the living conditions of these families or to achieve social mobility (Jimenez, 2003, 2004).

Chart 1
Based on the project *"Routes of small dreams"* (2005) / Data in %

Unaccompanied migrant minors in Spain - 2002

- 1,71 Unspecified countries
- 1,95 Europe-France
- 2,06 America
- 2,41 Asia
- 6,05 Sub-Saharan Africa
- 8,02 Romania
- 77,8 Morocco

It should be especially noted that this common belief is intensified by a triumphant attitude of their families abroad, because when returning to the country of origin, they almost never speak about the difficulties that have to be addressed within the host societies, and this fact only increases, in the imagination of these young people, the idea that immigration is the only way to escape an uncertain and bleak future. Finally, Liliana Suarez (2006:31-32) points out another factor that deserves special attention: the change in gender roles that has taken place in Morocco in recent years, with the advent of transnational corporations, which are beginning to hire women, displacing men in their role as breadwinners. As a result of this process, women, formerly responsible for caring of their children, realize that it is no longer possible to supervise them as before, when their work was compatible with this function (as the work in the field, for example). Adding this to the lack of social and educational resources, young people choose to look for work that is often poorly paid, or simply be on the street. Under these conditions, the desire to be independent and the migration itself appear as a form of rite of passage and an opportunity to reach adult life (see Suarez, 2006).

Based on the previous assumptions, Mercedes Jimenez[7] (2003) has outlined four types of profiles of these young people that are directly related to their context of origin:

a) **Minors included in the family migration networks that assume their role in a clear migration plan:** it consists of young people who are directly linked with the relatives who have immigrated to other countries and therefore are considered role models. In fact, they often use migration networks to set up

706

their migration project, being directly included by them in the context of destination. They are characterized by maintaining a stable relationship with their families and the priority of their migratory project is the insertion into work. It is a minority group comparing to other types of young people, especially due to their specific situation regarding the original context (Jimenez, 2003:48-49).

b) **Minors that do not have strong links with local migration networks and that assume their role in a migration project, facing a financially unstable family situation:** this profile relates to young people who are in the nucleus of their families in their context of origin and who start to work due to the precarious economic situation of their families. Nevertheless, it has an important role in the socialization of children, exercising their basic functions as a family nucleus. Regarding their migration project, this group seeks an immediate success, is very susceptible to frustration once in the host context and especially vulnerable towards to risk factors. This profile would conform to the majority of young people who migrate. (Jimenez, 2003:49-50).

c) **Minors that do not have strong links with local migration networks and that assume their role in a migratory project as a solution to escape a dysfunctional and economically precarious family situation:** this group is comprised of young people who face a situation of family breakdown, caused by divorce, orphanage, not recognized maternity and even cases of sexual abuse in the family. Therefore, they coexist in an unstable context, which affects their psychological development. They also tend to be in a very precarious economic situation. This group is a minority in comparison with other types (Jimenez, 2003:50).

d) **Originally street children:** finally, this profile relates to young people that in the context of origin make the street their way of life. It has to be added that, regarding the original context, within this typology, a distinction should be made between young people that come from other cities or villages to urban centers, regarded as points of departure for the initiation of the migratory project. In these cases, many young people who make the street their way of life, once in the host counties, have to spend long periods on the street, waiting for the chance to get across the border. Moreover, a distinction should be made between these young people and those who, once in the host countries, go to live on the street due to the difficulties to get integrated[8] (Jimenez, 2003:50-51).

Aside from these four profiles, the refugee status should be added especially in the case of sub-Saharan children. In a context of civil war and the fear of abduction by armed groups, many young people decide to migrate in search of security that they no longer have in their countries of origin.

2.2 Risk and social vulnerability

The young migrants without family references, like any teenager, face common challenges at this stage of life. However, there are other circumstances that dramatically affect their social well-being. As we explained earlier, most of them live in a situation of particular social vulnerability in their context of origin. In fact, this seems to be one of the main reasons that motivates them to choose or are forced to undertake a migration project. Nevertheless, once in the host countries, they frequently find themselves in a situation of increasing risk that is especially related to the difficulties inherent in their immigration status. The specificity of this group has created a legal clash, difficult to manage by the government. This is due to the fact that they are both: emigrants and minors: on one hand they have to be protected according to the legislation for children in distress in each country, and on the other hand, they are considered by the States as illegal immigrants.

Unfortunately, what has been generally noted is that the immigration law prevailed over the protection measures of childhood and adolescence, which has produced not only the vulnerability of these young people, but also their conversion into "street children". Moreover, this situation has created problems such as, for example crime, drug consumption and other antisocial activities that have a dramatic effect on the social fabric, fostering the emergence of a social alarm and the rejection towards them by part of the host societies. However, besides the stigma they are exposed to in the society, these social actions are not widespread among young migrants without family references (Arbex and Jimenez, 2004, 2005). This problem particularly, is generated by the vulnerable situation that they face, especially associated with the frustration of their migratory project (ibid.).

The studies on drug consumption among young people in the context of migration without family references point out some important factors that encourage this behavior (see Arbex and Jimenez, 2004, 2005). One of these is related to their personal development and refers to the conflicts generated by their own identity split. As noted by Carmen Arbex and Angel Jimenez (2004:35) it is about the crises that derive from "strong cultural differences, inability to maintain the lifestyles that they have been enjoying, the security of their identity and at the same time the need to acquire the necessary identity changes in order to adapt themselves to the new cultural codes of the host country". In other words, these adolescents go through a complex and difficult acculturation process in a period of their lives when many of them are still forming their cultural and personal identities.

In this regard, the fact that they can feel their culture as outdated and obsolete, that they do not have the same social and employment opportunities as local young people and if, moreover, we add the fact that they lack a social network that could protect them, all this generates a sense of frustration that destabilizes them, constituting a problematic factor that enhances, for example, the drug consumption (ibid.). The fact that they are unable to meet their expectations about their migration projects, their desire to work, often causes their entry into the world of drugs, in which they seek to escape from "the constant feeling of anxiety which they bear, living in an unpredictable world that they cannot dominate." (Arbex and Jimenez, 2004, p.35)

Another important dimension for the increased risk among this group is undoubtedly their family relationships. As stated above, the relationship they have with their families, determines a great deal of the profile of young people who migrate. In this regard, we note that among the adolescents that have been motivated to migrate by the socioeconomic gaps in the family context, the risk of antisocial behavior is higher, especially when they suffer from family pressure. The need for fast results compels them to commit petty thefts and escape by consuming drugs (Arbex and Jimenez, 2004, 2005). Similarly, their relation with the reference group is another very important dimension. Having no emotional ties in the host country, they have an increased need to be among a group of peers with whom they can establish emotional bonds. As mentioned before, many of them have no emotional references in the host societies, they do not have a model to follow, and thus their social group relationship is their main and only point of reference, which makes them more vulnerable to the influences of the group they are related to. In this sense, the group of peers they keep in touch with and their lifestyles constitute the main factor that generates, promotes and maintains the drug consumptions among its members (ibid.).

Finally, we have to highlight another important aspect that also affects the degree of vulnerability of these young people. The lack of socio-educational resources and of integrated and coordinated reception model among all Autonomous Communities affects their integration (Setien and Berganza, 2006). There is a considerable difference in the way the Autonomous Communities are taking care of these minors, but it can be noted that most of them take into account the "pull effect" logic. In this sense, it was decided to establish mechanisms that promote desistance, that discourage the migration of young people. Thus, the centers often offer almost no training activity and there is a latent delay in the guardianship and residence permit paperwork. Under these conditions, young people move from one community to another looking for a place that would offer them the best opportunities to succeed and in the meantime, many of them go to live on the streets. According to Marisa Luisa Setien and Isabel Berganza (2006:85) "some minors end up in the street due to the poor quality of the protection system. This situation is even worse for the minors who turn 18 and having been protected but not documented, are now left to their fate and *evicted from the system*".

All these aspects converge into a problematic scenario from the point of view of social inclusion, promoting a latent and worrying situation of risk. On the one hand, there is the difficulty related to their legal status, seen from different perspectives: from the focus of the child protection law, or, that which tends to occur more frequently, of an illegal immigrant. Moreover, the stigmatization of this group and their common connection to crime and drug consumption, results in an additional difficulty for their integration, just as the lack of the socio-educational resources, which is another aspect that has to be considered. There is no doubt that this is a complex issue that requires creative and innovative solutions.

2.3 Young migrants without family references and socio-educational intervention based on creative experiences: a project under construction

Although it is true that there are reasons to believe that these teenagers, when they decide to migrate, are victims of a situation of social exclusion, some authors believe that this phenomenon has to be regarded not only from a negative point of view, but also should emphasize "the innovative and particular character of these migrations and the children themselves as active builders of effective survival strategies" (Suarez, 2004:45). Therefore, it seems appropriate to consider that the intervention work in this group should be shaped in accordance with this feature, promoting their initiative, that is, their capacity for action. In this direction, the use of creative expressions can be an interesting resource when it comes to design the socio-educational programs for this group. As noted, young people today live according to the new global dynamics, in a changing world and this undeniably interferes with their personal development. The contradictions and tensions of this phase of life have multiplied and the challenges for their approval as autonomous and critical subjects, require new tools to increase their participation in society and their transformation into agents of social change, that is to say, their citizenship.

It has also become clear that they are in a specific situation that increases their vulnerability. They are facing countless trasformations in a phase of their lives when they are still shaping their identity. Also, many of them have dealt with traumatic situations, being alone and without any reference model nearby. Moreover, the stigmatization they suffer from, being commonly associated with crime, produces a growing rejection and a feeling of low self-esteem, that most of the times reverberates precisely in antisocial behavoiur as a form of empowerment or defense to a situation of social devaluation. All these aspects form a complex and problematic environment for their social intergation.

Taking into account the aforementioned examples and diagnosis, creative expressions asociated with the new communication technologies can be a good tool for working with social and educational intervention in this group. It is about creating spaces in which they could reflect, express themselves, implement their immagination and creative capacity in order to be able to understand the world around them in an active way. It is also essential to be trained in the use of the tools necessary for them to fully live their citizenship. That is why these programs have to be associated with new communication technologies.

Therefore, this research has as a starting point the hypothesis that the socio-educational intervention based on creative expressions enhances the social integration of the young migrants without family references. In this respect, the general objective of the research is to analyze the use of creative expression as a tool in socio-educational intervention with minor and young migrants without family references and inquire into the aspects that facilitate and enhance their integration process. In order to achieve this objective, we will use the participatory action research model, associated with participatory evaluation (see Bartolome and Cabrera, 2000). This methodology will enable us, through the application of a socio-educational program based on creative expressions, to ascertain the effects and the impact of the program on young people. This choice is based on the fact that this model can generate both, knowledge and social transformation, aside from representing an innovative technique with a strategic focus for action (Bartolome and Cabrera, 2000; Lopez-Barajas, 2002; Perez, 1999). We have chosen a qualitative

methodology that in this case permits an in-depth understanding of the situation and experience of these young migrants, as well as of other actors involved in this process, because it is considered to be essential to understand before acting (Tojar, 2006). Indeed, educational activities cannot be possible without knowledge and critical thinking generated by the dialogue among the actors involved in the process, learner and educator, and, therefore, an educational program has to be dialogically created in order to effectively face the challenges of the social transformation (Freire, 1978).

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712

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[2] Refer to http://www.afroreggae.org.br/

[3] Refer to http://www.sipaz.net/

[4] Refer to http://www.1minutoxmisderechos.org.ar y http://www.theoneminutesjr.org/

[5] Refer to http://www.videonasaldeias.org.br

[6] Although a generally known term to designate this group is Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMC), many scholars, among which Mercedes Jiménez, Liliana Suarez, Amina Bargach, Isabel Berganza y Marisa Luísa Setién, argue that the use of this term is inappropriate, as it does not include all the situations of arrival of these children. Similarly, its unselective use locked them in a

stereotype that has hindered their integration in the host societies. Therefore, it was decided to use the term "minor and young people in the context of migration".

[7] See also Suarez, 2004.

[8] We refer to the difficulties associated with the acquisition of the necessary permits so that they can benefit from the educational and social resources, as well as find a job.