

Focus on youth center: proposal and actions

Marina Martins Marinho , Roseli Esquerdo Lopes 

Universidade Federal de São Carlos – UFSCar, São Carlos, SP, Brasil.

Abstract: The “Elaine Viviani” Youth Center is a social institution aimed at young people in the South region of São Carlos (SP). This Center is located in the poorest area of the city where is found a high social vulnerability. This text derives from a piece of research whose general objective was to know and analyze the profile of the public served by the CJ, since its inauguration at the end of 2008, as well as to raise the proposed activities and its institutional dynamics. Initially, the data sought were age, gender, schooling, and neighborhood of origin, followed by participant observation, during the second half of 2012, of the activities, offered to their customers, as well as informal conversations with managers and youths in order to get to know the institutional dynamics. All the information provided was related to the procedures established by its “Pedagogical Politician Project” and the National Youth Policy. It was proved that different ages attend activities in the Institution besides teenagers and young adults. Moreover, girls’ attendance was smaller than boys’ attendance and the majority of users live in the surrounding areas. Among the activities, it was offered mainly technical and professional courses and sports-related activities. It is noted that although the “Pedagogical Politician Project” prioritizes its objective and proposals on young people, the reality observed and the data found pointed out that this population was not, in fact, prioritized.

Keywords: *Adolescent, Youth, Social Vulnerability, Public Policy, Social Occupational Therapy.*

Centro da juventude em foco: discursos e ações

Resumo: O Centro da Juventude “Elaine Viviani” (CJ) é um equipamento social voltado para a população juvenil da região sul da cidade de São Carlos (SP), avaliada como um dos seus maiores bolsões de pobreza e com importantes demandas quanto ao acesso da população a serviços públicos e bens sociais. Este texto decorre de uma pesquisa cujo objetivo geral foi conhecer e analisar o perfil do público atendido pelo CJ, desde sua inauguração, no final de 2008, como também, levantar as atividades propostas e sua dinâmica institucional. Inicialmente, os dados buscados foram idade, gênero, escolaridade e bairro de origem, seguido da observação participante, durante o segundo semestre de 2012, das atividades oferecidas a seus frequentadores, além de conversas informais com os gestores e jovens, a fim de se conhecer a dinâmica institucional. Tais dados foram relacionados com as diretrizes estabelecidas pelo projeto político pedagógico do CJ e ao que prevê a política nacional para a juventude. Identificou-se a participação nas atividades de outras faixas etárias, além dos jovens e adolescentes; verificou-se que as garotas têm uma frequência significativamente menor e, quanto à procedência, a maioria dos frequentadores reside em bairros próximos ao equipamento. Dentre as atividades oferecidas, foram predominantes os cursos técnicos e profissionalizantes e aquelas relacionadas ao esporte. Pontua-se que, apesar do CJ “Elaine Viviani” resultar de um processo que define seus objetivos e parametriza suas propostas para a focalização da população juvenil, a realidade observada e os dados encontrados apontaram que esta população não estava sendo, de fato, priorizada.

Palavras-chave: *Adolescência, Juventude, Vulnerabilidade Social, Política Social, Terapia Ocupacional Social.*

Corresponding author: Roseli Esquerdo Lopes, Departamento de Terapia Ocupacional, Universidade Federal de São Carlos – UFSCar, Rodovia Washington Luís, Km 235, CEP 13565-905, São Carlos, SP, e-mail: relopes@ufscar.br

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1. Introduction

Launched in 1998, the METUIA Project articulates teaching and research through therapeutic-occupational actions in the social field, aimed at strengthening the citizenship of individuals in processes of rupture of social support networks. In this perspective, it has been dedicated to working in an interface with the sectors of culture, education, social assistance and health (BARROS; LOPES; GALHEIGO, 2007; BARROS et al., 2007).

The social occupational therapy, advocated by METUIA¹, proposes and develops territorial and community actions, targeting population groups that are, according to Castel (2010) in what the author calls as a zone of social vulnerability and facing processes of disaffiliation. The idea of territory is taken as a historically and culturally constructed space, where relationships, whether work or personal, gain context, brands and belonging (OLIVER; BARROS, 1999). In general, occupational social therapy makes the territory the locus of intervention, promoting coexistence in it, dealing with individual and collective demands and moving between the role of technician, conflict mediator and political articulator (LOPES; MALFITANO, 2016).

From the perspective of social occupational therapy, since 2005, the METUIA/UFSCar team (Federal University of São Carlos) has been developing territorial actions in the Greater Aracy City region, focusing on the Jardim Gonzaga neighborhood, in the city of São Carlos (SP). In the first half of 2008, its coordination was invited by the São Carlos Special Municipal Secretariat for Children and Youth (SMEIJ) to advise on the formulation of the pedagogical political project of a Youth Center for the region, conducting the mediation and consulting work for the elaboration of the guidelines for its operation (LOPES et al., 2008). The “Elaine Viviani” Youth Center was inaugurated at the end of 2008, and part of the METUIA/UFSCar team started to develop, from this social equipment, teaching, research and university extension activities aimed at young people from this territory (LOPES et al., 2014).

When it comes to urban popular youth, for the population of the “Elaine Viviani” Youth Center turns, METUIA/UFSCar has been working to “enforce social rights of individual and collective subjects” (LOPES et al., 2014, p.594), taking the therapeutic-occupational action also from this institutional space as:

a theoretical-methodological option according to the principle of territorial responsibility

in care (BARROS; GHIRARDI; LOPES, 1999) that provides the displacement of the technician/social operator towards his audience, since it is necessary to effect the ‘decentralization’ of the action: from the setting to the spaces of everyday life (LOPES et al., 2014, p. 594).

Its proposal is to deal with contemporary demands, which ask professionals about the development and expansion of alternatives that deal with the processes of disruption of social support networks and deepening social vulnerability (LOPES; BORBA; CAPPELLARO, 2011).

1.1 Youths and propositions around Youth Centers

For the conceptual understanding of the population discussed here, it is necessary to clarify what is called youth and adolescence.

According to Silva and Lopes (2009, p. 88):

The term adolescence seems to be more linked to psychological theories, considering the individual as a psychic human being, based on the reality he builds and his subjective experience. The term youth seems to be privileged in the sociological and historical theories areas, in which the reading of the collective prevails. Thus, youth could only be understood in its articulation with the more general social processes and its insertion in the set of social relationships produced throughout history.

According to Pereira and Lopes (2016):

One of the discussions about “youth” falls on its age group, questioning the initial and final delimitation marks of this phase, the rites of passage from childhood to adolescence and youth and, later, the marks of entry into adulthood. The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies as young those between 15 and 24 years old. In Brazil, despite the Youth Statute approved in 2013, there is still debate about the thresholds between 15 and 29 years old, which includes part of what is still called adolescence, which, on the other hand, has a legal definition ranging from 12 full years to 18 incomplete years. The discussion of its superior delimitation, in terms of what is demarcated as a criminal majority, is a matter that has been rekindled among us in the current legislature (PEREIRA; LOPES, 2016, p. 213).

According to the 2010 Population Census, approximately 20% of the Brazilian population of young people was between 15 and 24 years old, and in the city of São Carlos (SP) about 12.8% of the inhabitants were young people between 15 and 29 years old (INSTITUTO..., 2011). These data numerically highlight the importance of these people as an individual of rights that demand specific policies.

As highlighted by Sposito and Carrano (2003), as the social processes become “political problems”, they begin to occupy the public agenda to formulate actions that answer to these problematic situations. The Youth Public Policies Booklet defines youth as “a stage of the life cycle - beyond a mere phase of transition or formulation - which carries meaning in itself”, when the individual processes the “conformation of life” more intensely to “its trajectory, values, and the search for its full insertion in social life” (BRASIL, 2013, p. 8).

Such a definition is important since from the formalized conception of youth, the projects and programs are developed, with the possibility of becoming the current normative representation of age and young people in society, that is, they can cause modulations in images that society builds on young people and their moment of life (SPOSITO; CARRANO, 2003).

The studies from the 1990s show the decade in which Brazil really seemed to have woken up to the problems of the youth population (SPOSITO; CARRANO, 2003; BRASIL, 2013). This fact does not mean that the youth situation was not previously worrying. Rates and indices showed and still show significant and alarming unemployment figures; low inclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities in schools; inequality in the illiteracy of white and black youth, university entry, victimization of violence and crime, including homicides; lag in school indexes of young people and adolescents in rural areas; poor housing conditions, among other aspects (BRASIL, 2013).

Thus, it is clear that poor young people and/or popular groups in Brazil suffer doubly in the social integration processes (CASTEL, 2010), either due to the social class or age group, which demands actions focused on

[...] the access to the educational system, job opportunities and productive actions and combat to the different forms of physical and symbolic violence (BRASIL, 2013, p.13).

Due to the increased awareness regarding the prioritization of youth as a portion of the population that requires specific looks, as well as theoretical

advances, some important steps were taken in the struggle for citizenship and rights, such as the promulgation of ECA (Statute of the Child and Adolescent), the creation of the National Youth Secretariat and the National Youth Council.

ECA (BRASIL, 1990) has brought important advances in the recognition of the right of children and adolescents, in any social situation, to have a home, a family, education, health, among other universal rights, and the State is also responsible for such care (SPOSITO; CARRANO, 2003). However, given the distance between the letter of the law and its implementation, much remains to be done towards the effective universalization of these rights, from the perspective of citizenship rather than charity and benevolence.

The National Youth Secretariat (SNJ) was created to “formulate, execute, supervise, coordinate, integrate and articulate” public policies for youth at the federal level, and it has the competence to articulate programs with several public and private sectors (BRASIL, 2006, p. 9).

On the other hand, the National Youth Council must bring together representatives of the public power and society, and consists of “a space for dialogue between Brazilian civil society, the government, and youth” (BRASIL, 2006, p. 9). It is an advisory body to the National Youth Secretariat, responsible for conducting studies of youth socio-economic reality and ensuring the effectiveness of the National Youth Policy (BRASIL, 2006).

Another advance was made in 2005 with the National Social Assistance Policy (PNAS) of the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS), which aims at two types of actions: one implementing access to the rights of minimum social protection, at different levels of complexity, of universalistic nature; and the other with a focal approach to those who are at risk and whose rights have been violated (BRASIL, 2005). Such advances are important for poor youth and/or popular groups.

Regarding government programs and projects aimed at young people and adolescents, according to a study by Sposito and Carrano (2003) in a survey carried out until 2002, there were relatively few that actually focused on the young population, such as the Youth Centers. Also, a significant number of projects developed indistinctly for children, youth and adolescents were found (SPOSITO; CARRANO, 2003). For these authors, this demonstrated the lack of consensus at the federal level about the need for public policies aimed exclusively at the young population.

As proposed by the Ministry of Assistance and Social Welfare, the guidelines of the Youth Centers were established by Ordinance 879/2001, guiding a tripod for the agenda of activities: information, sport, and culture, seeking youth protagonism, the universalization of the rights of respect for the dignity of the young citizen and the recognition of school rights as the main element of individual youth growth (BRASIL, 2001).

The Youth Centers were intended to be gradually incorporated by local governments through decreasing federal financial transfers over four years, with the induction of locally-based sustainability. However, the promise of four-year funding was not fully fulfilled by the Union. Many of the Youth Center projects initially created did not move forward because of the lack of funds to meet the material and human needs they demanded. This was because the federal government, through its SNJ, in the face of various disagreements with local-level management and the actors implementing the Youth Centers proposal, decided that it was more assertive to redirect their investment to more collective actions more autonomous of young people referred to the cultural dimension, such as, for example, the hip hop movement, the skateboarders, and not through an institutional proposal since no effective technical-professional mechanisms and transversality were created within the municipal administrations in the different folders that would need to be involved with youth issues (CARRANO, 2007)².

In São Carlos (SP), the implementation of the Youth Center (CJ) was later, at the end of 2008, but without failing to experience much of the difficulties mentioned above, a situation that remains until the present day. Such social equipment was possible in the city through international funding linked to the Inter-American Development Bank's *Habitat Brasil* Project, justified by the precarious conditions of life in *Jardim Gonzaga* and the concern that the national scene was gaining for young "problems", they would, therefore, need care, occupation, and control.

According to the approved project (LOPES et al., 2008), the CJ's task is to coordinate and implement the youth care policy of the southern region of São Carlos, which is considered one of its major pockets of poverty and social vulnerability and with important demands regarding the population's access to public services and social goods. Through the CJ, SMEIJ is expected to promote and articulate sectorial and cross-sectorial actions to create alternative care, culture, leisure, education and professionalization for young people in that region.

Before the existence of the CJ, young people from *Jardim Gonzaga* attended the *Jardim Pacaembu* Community Center, an institution linked to the Municipal Secretariat of Citizenship and Social Assistance, with easily accessible and with an institutional dynamic that favored the presence of young people since its regular schedule offer lunch and football. With the inauguration of CJ "Elaine Viviani", located in the *Jardim Monte Carlo* neighborhood, all programming with the youth population was suspended at the *Pacaembu* Community Center. The intention was to direct young people "from Gonzaga" to the activities of CJ, inaugurating a new institution with new rules, new employees, new equipment, however "without the ball and free meals and far from the neighborhood", that is, among other things, without the freedom to do what they wanted, without the guarantee of lunch and geographically located in another neighborhood. In conversations with some residents of different age groups, they resented the fact that this equipment was built in a neighborhood other than *Jardim Gonzaga* (LOPES; SOUZA; BORBA, 2010).

Due to the political processes of changes in the management teams, resulting from the alternation of mandate in the municipal executive, the CJ was inaugurated, but, it was assumed by a different team from the one that had elaborated its pedagogical political project, with most of its reduced staff available through staff travel and other secretariat resources, as SMEIJ had no budget of its own. Moreover, no training or history linked to youth work was necessarily required. Thus, at the beginning of the actions of the METUIA team at CJ in 2009, problems and resistance were observed regarding the activities planned for the "Elaine Viviani" Youth Center, on both sides.

In the first side, most members of the new management team (although there were exceptions) had a prejudiced view of young people and adolescents from that poor and peripheral region of São Carlos, and also from a perspective, according to Carrano (2007), of attention to an "open profile". That is, that the institution should involve young people of all conditions, including the youth in more vulnerable situations, which, in fact, justified the access to resources foreseen for this segment by the international agencies, such as the financing obtained from the Inter-American Development Bank. Malfitano (2008) also found in his doctoral thesis the rotation of teams in social services, naming as "cyclical element" the fact that with each new mandate, new priorities and intervention targets are

determined, which implies the reflection of ethical values and politicians of each administration, besides producing a constant beginning and re-beginning, which, in a way, interrupts the linear construction of the work.

On the other side, “*Gonzaga*” youths resisted occupying the new space. Among all the obstacles, the most difficult mediation with young people was for the requirement of presentation of the identification card, conceived by the new team as compulsory for access to the premises and activities of the CJ, requiring a photo (being the youth responsible to bringing it) and scheduling a medical exam.

These situations could explain the absence and/or non-access of the most vulnerable youth in CJ, especially those from *Jardim Gonzaga*, in the city of São Carlos (SP).

Thus, METUIA/UFSCar has invested in the active pursuit of these adolescents and young people through various strategies. However, the emptying of youth presence remains recurrent in all CJ free presence activities, including sports, always competitive.

In this scenario, the question that motivated this research was who was actually accessing the CJ and how this was related to the actions developed there, in front of the guidelines established by its pedagogical political project and the national policy for youth. Thus, the general objective of the study brought here was to know and analyze the profile of the people assisted by the CJ since its inauguration in late 2008 and to survey the proposed activities and their institutional dynamics.

2 Methodological Procedures

To know and analyze the profile of the people assisted by the “Elaine Viviani” Youth Center, the CJ of the city of São Carlos (SP), since its inauguration (2008) until 2012, a survey and systematization was carried out from a database of CJ’s visitors, taking as reference the registration carried out by its management for the preparation of the identification card that gives access to it, in the surveyed period.

The data sought were age, gender (OLINTO, 1998; LEITE JUNIOR; LOPES, 2017), education level and neighborhood of origin. The contact with these data through the mentioned registration allowed the creation of an Excel spreadsheet in which they were registered. However, this spreadsheet had to be extensively reformulated, as many fields contained in the institution’s registry were incorrectly filled out, that is, often the information was in fields

not compatible with its purpose or not recorded, as in the case of the education level. In fact, this data obtained through the records could not be considered³.

A second part of the research was by monitoring the activities of the METUIA/UFSCar team at CJ, where it was possible to observe the activities generally offered to its visitors during the second half of 2012, and the informal conversations with managers and young people to know the institutional dynamics.

CJ’s pedagogical political project was used as a guide for the discussion, and information about the records of its visitors.

Finally, it is important to highlight that all the procedures related to the empirical study were guided by the precepts of research ethics and by respecting the freedom and autonomy of the individuals regarding decisions about the participation and availability of data. The accomplishment of all these stages and the research proposition had the previous consent of the CJ management team.

3 Results and Discussion

The discussions brought here are from an aggregate of information recorded in the database of the “Elaine Viviani” (CJ) Youth Center visitors and their experiences. The following figures summarize the results from this database.

Initially, it is necessary to point out the difficulties in producing the database, as much information was not filled in the register. The discussion about the way information is stored is relevant since it is a document that should inform relevant aspects of the social equipment in the design of its actions and priorities.

Another factor was the lack of a standard for registering the denomination of the neighborhoods where the visitors lived since the same neighborhood received several nominations. Because of this, the standardization of the nomenclatures was made according to data found on the website of the Municipal Government of São Carlos on the worldwide web.

Also, many visitors had their information duplicated. This implied the search for these repetitions with the maintenance of the most current information and the exclusion of the others. Table 1 shows the age group of CJ visitors by gender, in the period investigated.

According to its political and pedagogical project (LOPES et al., 2008), the Youth Center was defined as a cross-sectoral social equipment, with

Table 1. Age group of Visitors of the CJ by Gender, 2008-2012.

Age group	General	%	Male	Female
Younger than 10 years old	73	Children	41	32
From 10 to 12 years old	318	11.20%	178	140
From 13 to 14 years old	267	Young and	153	114
From 15 to 18 years old	787	Adolescents	484	303
From 19 to 20 years old	364	64.49%	221	143
From 21 to 24 years old	452		180	272
From 25 to 29 years old	380		144	236
From 30 to 59 years old	734	Adults	216	518
		21.04%		
Older than 60 years old	114	Elderly People	31	83
		3.27%		
Total	3489	100	1648	1841

Source: "Elaine Viviani" Youth Center.

the general purpose of forming a municipal youth policy, and targeting the youth population aged from 15 to 29 years old, with emphasis on the age group from 15 to 19 years old.

When analyzing the total number of visitors found in the records with the field filled in age, it was observed that 64.49% are young and adolescents (between 13 and 29 years old), while 35.51% was the rest of the population, 11.20% were children (under 12 years old), 21.04% were adults (30 to 59 years old) and 3.27% were elderly people (over 60 years old). Although the number of young people and adolescents was higher than the rest of the visitors, this difference was only around 28.98%.

Correlating age group and gender, it was observed that the total number of female registrations is higher than the male ones. However, when the different age groups were analyzed, this number was reversed. Thus, the visitors between 13 and 29 years, there was a higher number of records of boys, about 10.67% (114 young) than the female population. Between 15 and 24 years old, the difference was greater, 23.25% (167 young). These data illustrate a feature observed and widely debated about the female population that effectively frequents the equipment and also the presence, or not, of girls in the public spaces of the neighborhood, such as squares and sports court.

Lopes, Borba, and Monzeli (2013) highlighted the greater presence of boys in the "Elaine Viviani" Youth Center, showing the greater control that families have over girls and the overload of tasks performed by them in the opposite period of school as part of their reasons. Thus, the circulation around the territory ends up being restricted to going to school and the overload comes from the care of brothers and nephews or their own children, making the presence of girls in public spaces, including leisure

ones. A third hypothesis, which does not exclude the others, refers to the association made by girls of the CJ as a predominantly male place of presence that it was possible to be verified through observations and direct contact⁴.

Children also have a card and their presence in CJ was frequent. At different times of visiting the CJ, it was possible to observe activities being adapted for the participation of children. The discussion here was about the spaces in this community, and throughout the city of São Carlos, intended for children beyond schools, since this population also seeks to access what CJ offers, although the activities were not planned for them.

The strong presence of adults and elderly people in the records was justified by the offer of Education for Youth and Adults - EJA, which was already planned to take place in the CJ area, but as a result of a need of young people who did not attend school in their own time and addressed to them. From this, it would be relevant a survey of social support equipment to determine what is the appropriate space for this population within the community in which they reside, so such activities aimed at the adult and elderly population could be offered in another environment, enabling specific proposals expected for the Youth Center.

According to its political and pedagogical project, the CJ was strategically located in the southern region of the city of São Carlos (SP), known as *Grande Cidade Aracy*, because it is a peripheral and impoverished area, which demands infrastructure, besides the public and private network services to be precarious to attend to its inhabitants (LOPES et al., 2008).

Apart from a large number of inhabitants in the region, the social context that surrounds this territory has important particularities that need to be considered in proposing strategies and policies.

The illegal drug trade, the fragility of family and community ties, a precarious social support network and social prejudice against the young people who live there are characteristics that were punctuated during the process of implantation of the equipment.

Despite this cut in the region strategically chosen for the construction of the first Youth Center in the city, the participation of young people from other locations was not excluded.

Records indicate that *Monte Carlo* neighborhood has the largest number of visitors, and its location contributes to this aspect since the equipment facilities are in it. In descending order there are *Cruzeiro do Sul*, *Cidade Aracy* (with *Cidade Aracy I* and *II*), *Jardim Gonzaga*, *Madre Cabrini*, and *Vila Conceição* neighborhoods with more than 200 residents, as shown in Table 2 below.

The second Youth Center named “Lauriberto José Reyes” was inaugurated on July 2012, in the city of São Carlos, in *Cidade Aracy* neighborhood. Considering that Youth Centers are the main equipment to articulate discussions and implement actions with youth, the location in peripheral areas is a strategy to reach young people from regions in areas of greater social vulnerability (CASTEL, 2010). However, other young residents of the city should also be contemplated with participatory policies that promote their “empowerment” as citizens, so their activities can articulate young people from all over the city to promote dialogue, circulation, and discussions between them.

3.1 Activities of the “Elaine Viviani” Youth Center - 2012

The activities offered at CJ were: - vocational-technical courses, such as cashier, general practices for commerce, retail salesman, marketing operator,

finance and credit and collection assistant; - other courses such as waiter, pizza maker, kitchen assistant, computer science; - ballet, karate, guitar, origami classes; - physical activities such as walking, gymnastics, stretching and water aerobics; - sports such as soccer and swimming; - Projovem Adolescent; - Cine Club; - school reinforcement; - workshops offered by METUIA/UFSCar and, - the use of the swimming pool and the computer room, in free time.

The vocational courses were one of the most offered activities in the “Elaine Viviani” Youth Center, which may indicate that the expectation of projects by the youth programs still remains focused on the vision of individuals “born” to work, as a positive factor for the improvement of the social and economic situation. As is well known, in other social classes, this is not the case. The education is turned to the knowledge heritage of humanity to be apprehended until entering Higher Education when it would then be dealt with vocational training (NOSELLA, 2015).

An excerpt from the Youth Public Policies Booklet (BRASIL, 2013) stated the linkage of public policies with the preparation of young people for work as a strategy:

By combining work experience with technical and vocational training, some of these programs make learning present as an alternative and opportunity for young people to be inserted more qualified in the labor market (BRASIL, 2013, p. 13).

Although this is a path imposed on this population, it is taken positively by many young people from the popular strata, especially those considered vulnerable and as the object of social actions (the “problems” on the political agenda). The value of job insertion can be linked to a number of factors. Malfitano

Table 2. Residence Neighborhoods of the Visitors of the CJ by Gender, 2008-2012.

NEIGHBORHOOD	GENERAL	MALE	FEMALE
Monte Carlo	912	408	504
Cruzeiro do Sul	586	227	359
Cidade Aracy	569	338	231
Jardim Gonzaga	351	178	173
Madre Cabrini	265	118	147
Vila Conceição	220	91	129
Jardim Pacaembu	130	69	61
Antenor Garcia	58	35	23
Jardim Pres. Fernando Collor de Mello	56	29	27
Vila Prado	56	22	34
Outros bairros	339	157	182
Total	3542	1672	1870

Source: “Elaine Viviani” Youth Center.

(2008) points out that it enables the entry into the circulation of social exchange systems through the sphere of consumption.

Looking at youth unemployment rates in Brazil, the size of this issue is drawn to 46% of the population aged 15-29 (CASTRO; AQUINO, 2008). The National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) of 2009 points to rates three times higher in youth unemployment compared to the adult unemployment rate (BRASIL, 2013). Also, the wage society crisis described by Castel (2010) may mean increasing rates, as one of the factors of this crisis is the difficulty of entering the world of work.

The search for alternative ways of survival and participation in the exchange system can very objectively be linked to the difficulties that young people face in the formal labor market, finding exits in the informal and often illegal market such as the drug trade, the street, (MALFITANO, 2008) or even thefts.

The work imposed indirectly through vocational courses may not be adequate from the point of view of equal access (NOSELLA, 2015), but poor young people from their social “non-place” are somehow, although not the best, benefit from this precarious “social contribution”. Thus, these courses also aim to fulfill the desire of those young people in professional terms and are directed to a part of CJ’s visitors.

Regarding the activities of METUIA, its guideline was to move towards making the CJ a reference and living space for youth, promoting actions that included the plurality of this segment, while remaining concerned with welcoming and effective insertion of young people facing difficulties in social integration processes.

One of the activities that provided important proximity and permanence of young people in the spaces was the Radio Workshop, a proposal suggested by the young people who attended the CJ. Participants had a list of songs to be played and the repertoire was constructed at each meeting. Radio could happen in conjunction with football, for example, an activity that generally attracted a large number of participants and programming was a relevant means of rapprochement and linking between young people and the team. Thus, many young people who got to know the team through song requests felt comfortable to participate in the other activities that were developed later. As a medium activity, the radio favored the rapprochement between young people and the METUIA team and contributed to the arrival and permanence of young

people in other spaces of construction, reflection, and activities.

There was a geographical division caused by the spatial location of the CJ that did not attract the young population of *Jardim Gonzaga* neighborhood who are more exposed to more serious situations of social vulnerability (with the violence arising from the presence of organized crime and poverty), and did not reach the neighboring young population, when there were no vocational courses.

As a strategy to deal with this issue, the team proposed to conduct activities directly in the territory, aiming to reach another group of young people who had not been attending the CJ. To this end, it planned and executed some “Workshops” (LOPES et al., 2014) in the territory around the CJ, that is, in public spaces of youth circulation, such as squares and other social services and facilities, and at Jardim Gonzaga Community Station (ECO). There were cleaning and planting of trees in a neighborhood square as an example of these activities. This was a joint action between METUIA and ECO, the Association of Residents “*Amigas da Praça*” and the Municipal Secretariat of the Environment. With the participation of the local community (youth, adults, and children), the square was cleared and garbage and rubble were collected. After cleaning, 20 seedlings of already medium-sized trees were planted, obtained from the Municipal Secretariat of the Environment. The community actively participated in the whole process, from drafting the proposal to deciding where in the square each tree would be planted (SILVA; SOUZA, 2016).

As it was carried out in the territory and beyond the walls of the CJ, the planting of the trees enabled to contact the young people who had ceased to be in the equipment, as well as to access others who traditionally did not occupy or did not transit through that institutional space. Thus, it was a way of spreading not only the Workshop, but the CJ as a whole to those interested people and, first and foremost, to work on the circulation of ideas, people and activities in the neighborhood.

There were also workshops that aimed to work on the proposals of photography, image, and sound. The use of roll-up cameras generated great curiosity in young people, as many had never seen a non-digital camera. That is, revealing the photos, worked with digital machines, filming and video editing with stop motion technique, making a “movie” from a sequence of photos.

4 Conclusion

The activities offered at CJ were: - vocational-technical courses, such as cashier, general practices for commerce, retail salesman, marketing operator, finance and credit and collection assistant; - other courses such as waiter, pizza maker, kitchen assistant, computer science; - ballet, karate, guitar, origami classes; - physical activities such as walking, gymnastics, stretching and water aerobics; - sports such as soccer and swimming; - ProJovem Adolescent; - Cine Club; - school reinforcement; - workshops offered by METUIA/UFSCar and, - the use of the swimming pool and the computer room, in free time.

The vocational courses were one of the most offered activities in the “Elaine Viviani” Youth Center, which may indicate that the expectation of projects by the youth programs still remains focused on the vision of individuals “born” to work, as a positive factor for the improvement of the social and economic situation. As is well known, in other social classes, this is not the case. The education is turned to the knowledge heritage of humanity to be apprehended until entering Higher Education when it would then be dealt with vocational training (NOSELLA, 2015).

An excerpt from the Youth Public Policies Booklet (BRASIL, 2013) stated the linkage of public policies with the preparation of young people for work as a strategy:

By combining work experience with technical and vocational training, some of these programs make learning present as an alternative and opportunity for young people to be inserted more qualified in the labor market (BRASIL, 2013, p. 13).

Although this is a path imposed on this population, it is taken positively by many young people from the popular strata, especially those considered vulnerable and as the object of social actions (the “problems” on the political agenda). The value of job insertion can be linked to a number of factors. Malfitano (2008) points out that it enables the entry into the circulation of social exchange systems through the sphere of consumption.

Looking at youth unemployment rates in Brazil, the size of this issue is drawn to 46% of the population aged 15-29 (CASTRO; AQUINO, 2008). The National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) of 2009 points to rates three times higher in youth unemployment compared to the adult unemployment rate (BRASIL, 2013). Also, the wage society crisis described by Castel (2010) may

mean increasing rates, as one of the factors of this crisis is the difficulty of entering the world of work.

The search for alternative ways of survival and participation in the exchange system can very objectively be linked to the difficulties that young people face in the formal labor market, finding exits in the informal and often illegal market such as the drug trade, the street, (MALFITANO, 2008) or even thefts.

The work imposed indirectly through vocational courses may not be adequate from the point of view of equal access (NOSELLA, 2015), but poor young people from their social “non-place” are somehow, although not the best, benefit from this precarious “social contribution”. Thus, these courses also aim to fulfill the desire of those young people in professional terms and are directed to a part of CJ’s visitors.

Regarding the activities of METUIA, its guideline was to move towards making the CJ a reference and living space for youth, promoting actions that included the plurality of this segment, while remaining concerned with welcoming and effective insertion of young people facing difficulties in social integration processes.

One of the activities that provided important proximity and permanence of young people in the spaces was the Radio Workshop, a proposal suggested by the young people who attended the CJ. Participants had a list of songs to be played and the repertoire was constructed at each meeting. Radio could happen in conjunction with football, for example, an activity that generally attracted a large number of participants and programming was a relevant means of rapprochement and linking between young people and the team. Thus, many young people who got to know the team through song requests felt comfortable to participate in the other activities that were developed later. As a medium activity, the radio favored the rapprochement between young people and the METUIA team and contributed to the arrival and permanence of young people in other spaces of construction, reflection, and activities.

There was a geographical division caused by the spatial location of the CJ that did not attract the young population of *Jardim Gonzaga* neighborhood who are more exposed to more serious situations of social vulnerability (with the violence arising from the presence of organized crime and poverty), and did not reach the neighboring young population, when there were no vocational courses.

As a strategy to deal with this issue, the team proposed to conduct activities directly in the territory,

aiming to reach another group of young people who had not been attending the CJ. To this end, it planned and executed some “Workshops” (LOPES et al., 2014) in the territory around the CJ, that is, in public spaces of youth circulation, such as squares and other social services and facilities, and at Jardim Gonzaga Community Station (ECO). There were cleaning and planting of trees in a neighborhood square as an example of these activities. This was a joint action between METUIA and ECO, the Association of Residents “*Amigas da Praça*” and the Municipal Secretariat of the Environment. With the participation of the local community (youth, adults, and children), the square was cleared and garbage and rubble were collected. After cleaning, 20 seedlings of already medium-sized trees were planted, obtained from the Municipal Secretariat of the Environment. The community actively participated in the whole process, from drafting the proposal to deciding where in the square each tree would be planted (SILVA; SOUZA, 2016).

As it was carried out in the territory and beyond the walls of the CJ, the planting of the trees enabled to contact the young people who had ceased to be in the equipment, as well as to access others who traditionally did not occupy or did not transit through that institutional space. Thus, it was a way of spreading not only the Workshop, but the CJ as a whole to those interested people and, first and foremost, to work on the circulation of ideas, people and activities in the neighborhood.

There were also workshops that aimed to work on the proposals of photography, image, and sound. The use of roll-up cameras generated great curiosity in young people, as many had never seen a non-digital camera. That is, revealing the photos, worked with digital machines, filming and video editing with stop motion technique, making a “movie” from a sequence of photos.

While youth issues should be articulated across all social classes, pockets of poverty and emerging problems should be chosen first, as they have no other means of accessing social goods, in a broad sense.

Regarding the activities offered by CJ, regardless of the different managements and their priorities, the technical and vocational courses, as well as sports activities were always predominant. Also, one of the projects linked to sports, targeted children from 7 to 11 years old, neglecting young people and adolescents⁵.

MOVA⁶ also opened its audience to all age groups, drawing attention to the participation of the student (s) up to 16 years old, which at some

stage of life, should be protected from their right and duty to attend regular school, in accordance with the Child and Adolescent Statute.

METUIA’s work in CJ depends on maintaining partnerships with the São Carlos Municipal Special Secretariat for Children and Youth. Despite the interest expressed by the different administrations, the fundamental contribution that comes from hiring an occupational therapist to work at CJ has not yet been done. Thus, university extension activities are carried out in the interest of teaching and research, when occupational therapy has significant resources for working with young people from urban peripheries.

The METUIA/UFSCar team sees as fundamental, besides the continuity of the actions in the workshops and in the other collective spaces that offers, since the inauguration of the CJ, the work to maintain the dialogue with the CJ work team to increase the reception of specific demands of young people enrolled in socially vulnerable areas, facilitating their inclusion, in a perspective of belonging for the social equipment.

About public policies in this area, Sposito and Carrano (2003 p. 37) point out some needs, such as:

Building a different way of understanding young people in Brazilian society, to be expressed both in the democratic public policies that recognize the non-fulfillment of historically denied rights - education, health and work - as capable of opening up to other modalities action plans that contemplate new youth rights [...] to inscribe youth policies in a broader agenda of universalist public rights. These guidelines should presuppose young people as autonomous individuals and as active interlocutors in formulating, implementing and evaluating their policies.

Consolidating the means for youth autonomy to have a place on the public agenda is paramount, so they are really part of the discussions, to participate in decisions and if possible talk about youth policies.

Malfitano (2008), highlighted that the recognition of the need for actions developed by the State focused on youth by the public sphere, within the scope of social policies, is a challenge.

The youth category in its sociological sense is the result of recent socioeconomic and cultural transformations in life processes within contemporary society. The tensions of the trials for the debate on the entry into the political agenda of the demand for actions and interventions for this population, in the direction of promoting access to their rights are current (MALFITANO, 2008, p. 291).

Thus, macro-social political aspects should be considered. The results presented here led to the conclusion that although the “Elaine Viviani” Youth Center has a political and pedagogical project that defines its objectives and parameterizes its proposals for targeting the youth population of the city of São Carlos (SP), the difficulties around the prioritization of urban popular youth remain for the access to social goods, such as education, culture and leisure, also demonstrating that the particular cut is articulated with the most of social inequality that has marked this portion of the Brazilian population.

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Notes

¹ There are currently six nuclei of METUIA - Social Occupational Therapy in Brazil: at the University of São Paulo (São Paulo/SP), at the Federal University of São Carlos (São Carlos/SP), at the Federal University of São Paulo (Santos/SP), at the Federal University of Espírito Santo (Vitória/ES), at the University of Brasília (Brasília/DF) and the one that aggregates the Federal University of Paraíba (João Pessoa / PB) and the State University of Health Sciences from Alagoas (Maceió/AL).

² To update the debate on the implementation of Youth Centers in Brazil, it is suggested the study by Barreiro (2014), entitled "*Youth Public Scenarios: The Design of Youth Centers in the Actions of Brazilian Politics*", held at Master of the Postgraduate Program in Occupational Therapy at UFSCar.

³ In a universe of 3560 people, it would be extremely alarming that 2,121 of them were reported to have no school. The distribution in the other levels was more in line with the expected in view of the socioeconomic characteristics of the population in their age groups. This question was brought to the leaders of the CJ so possible measures could be taken, especially if it was verified that this population did exist at this level. However, an important aspect of the work of the METUIA/UFSCar team at CJ concerns the return to school for many young people who evade it, especially those with the greatest social vulnerabilities (BORBA, 2012).

⁴ One of the research work carried out by the METUIA/UFSCar team to apprehend and discuss the processes around the circulation of girls in this territory was the study by Cappellaro (2013), entitled "*Where are the girls? Life and traits of young poor girls from the perspective of social occupational therapy*", held at the Master Course of the Postgraduate Program in Occupational Therapy at UFSCar.

⁵ Athlete of the Future Project

⁶ Youth and Adult Literacy Movement.