

Intervención social y jóvenes

Idioma: EN

EXAM STATEMENT:

Exam duration: 90 minutes. No materials are permitted. You must choose two of the three questions to answer. In the questions, you must answer the underlined parts. The non-underlined parts are the context of the question. The content of the answers must include all the central aspects addressed in the heading/subheading of the topic. Each answer must be structured in an orderly manner, coherent, and conceptually precise, avoiding generalisations. Careful writing and no spelling mistakes will also be taken into consideration to pass the exam. Similarities and/or literalities between exams will be grounds for failure. Likewise, literal reproductions of the basic text are not permitted, except for those referring to specific definitions and classifications of an author(s), institutions or organisations.

Question 1: Strategies for socio-educational intervention in the context of participation and social sustainability. (The strategic approach to socio-educational intervention in different contexts).

Question 2: Strategies for socio-educational intervention in the context of complexity and the ecology of action. (The strategic approach to socio-educational intervention in different contexts).

Question 3: Research for action: young people facing social difficulties. (Evaluating and researching for action).

Question 1

Strategies for socio-educational intervention in the context of participation and social sustainability. (The strategic approach to socio-educational intervention in different contexts).

STUDENT RESPONSE:

Strategies for socio-educational intervention in the context of participation and social sustainability require a multidimensional and participatory approach that integrates young people as active agents in their own development while ensuring the long-term viability of social structures. This strategic approach must be grounded in theoretical frameworks that emphasize empowerment, collective action, and ecological perspectives, aligning with the principles of social sustainability. Below is a structured analysis of the key components and strategies:

1. Conceptual Foundations of Participation and Social Sustainability

- Participation is understood as a process through which young people engage in decision-making, co-design, and implementation of interventions that affect their lives. It moves beyond tokenism to foster genuine agency, critical thinking, and social responsibility.
- Social sustainability refers to the capacity of social systems to endure and adapt over time, ensuring equity, inclusion, and the fulfillment of human needs without compromising future generations. In youth intervention, this implies creating structures that are resilient, inclusive, and responsive to the evolving demands of young populations.

2. Strategic Approaches to Socio-Educational Intervention

a. Participatory Diagnosis and Needs Assessment

- Involves young people in identifying their own needs, strengths, and challenges through participatory methodologies such as focus groups, photovoice, or community mapping. This ensures that interventions are contextually relevant and culturally sensitive.
- Tools like SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) or asset-based community development (ABCD) can be employed to map resources and gaps collaboratively.

b. Empowerment-Based Strategies

- Empowerment is operationalized through the development of critical consciousness (Freirean pedagogy), skill-building, and the creation of spaces where young people can exercise leadership and influence.
- Strategies include peer education, mentoring programs, and the promotion of youth-led initiatives, which enhance self-efficacy and collective efficacy.

c. Community-Based and Networked Interventions

- Interventions must be embedded within local communities, leveraging existing social capital and fostering intergenerational and intersectoral collaboration. This includes partnerships with schools, NGOs, local governments, and private entities.
- The ecology of action framework (Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory) is applied to design interventions that address micro (individual), meso (family/community), exo (institutional), and macro (policy) levels.

d. Sustainable Project Design and Implementation

- Projects must incorporate sustainability criteria from the outset, including economic viability, environmental responsibility, and social equity. For example, youth employment programs should not only provide immediate opportunities but also ensure long-term employability through upskilling and access to social protection.
- The use of logic models or theory of change frameworks helps articulate how short-term outcomes (e.g., increased participation) contribute to long-term impacts (e.g., reduced social exclusion).

e. Advocacy and Policy Influence

- Socio-educational interventions must extend beyond direct service provision to include advocacy for structural changes that address systemic barriers (e.g., discrimination, lack of access to education, or precarious labor markets).
- Youth councils, participatory budgeting, and policy co-design are mechanisms to ensure young people's voices are integrated into public decision-making processes.

3. Evaluation and Monitoring for Social Sustainability

- Evaluation must be participatory, continuous, and focused on both process and impact. Indicators should measure not only quantitative outcomes (e.g., number of participants) but also qualitative changes (e.g., shifts in power dynamics, community cohesion).
- Tools such as Most Significant Change (MSC) or Outcome Mapping can capture transformative effects that traditional metrics might overlook.
- Feedback loops must be established to adapt interventions based on the evolving needs and aspirations of young people, ensuring responsiveness and relevance.

4. Challenges and Ethical Considerations

- Participation must be voluntary and free from coercion, avoiding the instrumentalization of young people for institutional agendas.
- Interventions must address power imbalances, ensuring marginalized youth (e.g., migrants, LGBTQ+, or those with disabilities) are not excluded from participation.
- Sustainability requires securing long-term funding, institutional commitment, and the transfer of ownership to local actors, including young people themselves.

5. Examples of Best Practices

- Youth-led social enterprises that combine economic empowerment with social innovation (e.g., cooperatives addressing local environmental issues).
- Participatory action research (PAR) projects where young people investigate and propose solutions to community problems, such as urban segregation or digital divides.
- Cross-sectoral platforms (e.g., youth parliaments) that facilitate dialogue between young people and policymakers, ensuring policies reflect their priorities.

In summary, socio-educational intervention in the context of participation and social sustainability demands a strategic, adaptive, and inclusive approach that prioritizes young people's agency while addressing structural inequalities. The

integration of participatory methodologies, empowerment strategies, and sustainability criteria ensures that interventions are not only effective in the short term but also contribute to the creation of fairer and more resilient societies.

Question 2

Strategies for socio-educational intervention in the context of complexity and the ecology of action. (The strategic approach to socio-educational intervention in different contexts).

STUDENT RESPONSE:

Strategies for socio-educational intervention in the context of complexity and the ecology of action require a multidimensional and adaptive approach that acknowledges the interdependence of individual, social, and structural factors. This framework is grounded in the recognition that youth development occurs within dynamic systems influenced by multiple actors, institutions, and environmental conditions. Below are the key components of a strategic approach in this context:

1. Understanding Complexity in Youth Intervention

Complexity in socio-educational intervention refers to the interplay of diverse variables—social, economic, cultural, and political—that shape young people's realities. This perspective rejects linear causality, instead emphasizing non-deterministic outcomes, feedback loops, and emergent properties. Key theoretical frameworks include:

- **Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner):** The ecological model highlights the nested systems (micro, meso, exo, macro, and chrono) that influence youth development. Intervention must address not only individual needs but also the interactions between these systems.
- **Chaos and Complexity Theory:** Recognizes that small changes in initial conditions can lead to disproportionate outcomes, requiring flexible and adaptive strategies rather than rigid planning.
- **Social Constructionism:** Youth identities and challenges are shaped by social discourses and power structures, necessitating critical reflection on normative assumptions in intervention design.

2. The Ecology of Action: Contextualizing Intervention

The ecology of action, as conceptualized by Edgar Morin, underscores that interventions are embedded within broader social, institutional, and historical contexts. This implies:

- **Interdependence of Actors:** Effective strategies require collaboration among families, schools, peer groups, NGOs, public services, and policymakers. Coordination mechanisms (e.g., intersectoral networks) are essential to avoid fragmented responses.
- **Unintended Consequences:** Actions may produce unforeseen effects due to the non-linear nature of social systems. Continuous monitoring and reflexivity are necessary to adjust strategies.
- **Power Dynamics:** Interventions must account for asymmetries in power (e.g., generational, class, gender, or ethnic hierarchies) that shape youth agency and access to resources.

3. Strategic Approaches to Intervention

To navigate complexity and the ecology of action, socio-educational strategies should integrate the following principles:

- **Participatory and Empowerment-Based Models:** Young people are not passive recipients but active agents in their development. Strategies such as

participatory action research (PAR), youth-led initiatives, and co-design processes ensure their voices are central to intervention planning.

- **Adaptive and Iterative Planning:** Given the unpredictability of outcomes, interventions should employ iterative cycles of planning, implementation, evaluation, and adjustment (e.g., the Plan-Do-Study-Act model). This allows for responsiveness to emerging needs.

- **Strengths-Based and Resilience-Oriented Approaches:** Rather than focusing solely on deficits, interventions should identify and build on young people's assets, protective factors, and coping mechanisms. Examples include asset-based community development (ABCD) and resilience theory.

- **Intersectoral and Multidisciplinary Collaboration:** Complex problems (e.g., youth unemployment, mental health, or social exclusion) require integrated responses. Strategies may involve joint protocols between social services, education, health, and employment sectors.

- **Critical and Reflective Practice:** Practitioners must engage in ongoing reflection on their own biases, the ethical implications of their actions, and the structural barriers faced by youth. Tools such as reflective journals or supervision groups can support this process.

4. Methodological Tools for Complex Contexts

Specific methodologies align with the ecology of action and complexity:

- **Network Analysis:** Maps relationships between actors and institutions to identify leverage points for intervention (e.g., strengthening weak ties in support networks).

- **Scenario Planning:** Anticipates multiple possible futures to design flexible strategies that account for uncertainty.

- **Case Management with a Holistic Lens:** Addresses the interconnected needs of young people (e.g., housing, education, mental health) through coordinated care plans.

- **Community-Based Interventions:** Leverages local resources and social capital to create sustainable change (e.g., youth clubs, mentoring programs, or community centers).

5. Evaluation in Complex Systems

Traditional evaluation methods (e.g., pre/post-test designs) may be insufficient in complex contexts. Alternative approaches include:

- **Developmental Evaluation:** Supports real-time learning and adaptation by embedding evaluators within the intervention process.

- **Theory of Change:** Articulates the assumptions, pathways, and outcomes of an intervention, allowing for iterative testing and refinement.

- **Qualitative and Mixed-Methods Research:** Captures nuanced experiences and contextual factors that quantitative data may overlook.

6. Challenges and Ethical Considerations

- **Balancing Standardization and Flexibility:** While protocols ensure consistency, rigid adherence may hinder responsiveness to local needs.

- **Sustainability:** Interventions must consider long-term funding, institutional commitment, and community ownership to avoid dependency on external actors.

- **Ethical Dilemmas:** Issues such as confidentiality, informed consent, and the potential for stigmatization require careful navigation, particularly in vulnerable populations.

In summary, socio-educational intervention in the context of complexity and the ecology of action demands a shift from prescriptive, top-down models to dynamic, collaborative, and reflexive practices. By embracing uncertainty, fostering participation, and leveraging interdisciplinary approaches, practitioners can design strategies that are both effective and ethically grounded in addressing the multifaceted realities of young people.

Question 3

Research for action: young people facing social difficulties. (Evaluating and researching for action).

STUDENT RESPONSE:

Research for Action: Young People Facing Social Difficulties

Research for action in the context of young people facing social difficulties adopts a participatory and transformative approach, integrating evaluation and intervention to address structural and individual challenges. This methodology combines diagnostic analysis, intervention design, and systematic assessment to generate practical solutions grounded in empirical evidence. Below are the key dimensions of this approach:

1. Conceptual Framework and Objectives

Research for action aims to identify, analyse, and intervene in the social difficulties affecting young people while fostering their active participation. Its objectives include:

- Diagnosing the root causes of social exclusion, inequality, or risk situations (e.g., unemployment, school dropout, mental health issues, or marginalisation).
- Designing context-specific strategies that align with the needs and agency of young people.
- Evaluating the impact of interventions to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.

This framework is rooted in critical social work, emphasising empowerment, social justice, and the deconstruction of systemic barriers.

2. Methodological Phases

The process unfolds in iterative stages, ensuring adaptability and reflexivity:

- **Diagnostic Phase:** Qualitative and quantitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, surveys, or participatory observation) are employed to map the realities of young people. Key variables include socio-demographic profiles, risk factors (e.g., poverty, discrimination, or violence), and protective factors (e.g., family support, community networks). Institutional data (e.g., from social services or NGOs) may complement primary research.
- **Participatory Design:** Young people are involved as co-researchers or collaborators to ensure interventions reflect their perspectives. Techniques such as photovoice, community mapping, or participatory workshops are used to co-create solutions.
- **Implementation:** Interventions are tailored to the identified needs, ranging from individualised support (e.g., mentoring, counselling) to collective actions (e.g., advocacy campaigns, skill-building workshops). The ecology of action (Bronfenbrenner's model) is considered, addressing micro (family, peers), meso (schools, neighbourhoods), and macro (policies, cultural norms) systems.
- **Evaluation and Feedback:** Mixed-method evaluations assess outcomes (e.g., changes in behaviour, access to resources, or policy impact) and processes (e.g., participation levels, stakeholder collaboration). Tools include pre/post-intervention measurements, case studies, or longitudinal tracking. Feedback loops allow for continuous adjustment.

3. Key Areas of Focus

Research for action targets specific social difficulties, including:

- **Economic Vulnerability:** Unemployment, precarious labour, or financial dependence, often linked to structural inequalities (e.g., class, ethnicity, or migration status). Interventions may involve vocational training, entrepreneurship programmes, or advocacy for labour rights.
- **Educational Exclusion:** School dropout, lack of access to higher education, or digital divides. Strategies include alternative education models, tutoring, or policy reforms to reduce barriers.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** Anxiety, depression, or substance abuse, exacerbated by social stigma or lack of services. Approaches combine therapeutic support, peer networks, and awareness campaigns.
- **Social Marginalisation:** Discrimination based on gender, race, sexual orientation, or disability. Interventions focus on community integration, anti-discrimination policies, and identity-affirming spaces.
- **Digital Risks:** Cyberbullying, misinformation, or online exploitation. Programmes address digital literacy, safe online practices, and regulatory frameworks.

4. Role of Social Work and Institutional Coordination

Social workers act as facilitators, linking research to practice through:

- **Networking:** Collaborating with public institutions (e.g., social services, schools), private entities (e.g., NGOs, foundations), and grassroots organisations to pool resources and expertise.
- **Advocacy:** Using research findings to influence policies (e.g., youth employment laws, mental health services) or secure funding for interventions.
- **Capacity Building:** Training professionals and young people in participatory methodologies, evaluation techniques, and advocacy skills to sustain long-term change.

5. Challenges and Ethical Considerations

- **Participation vs. Tokenism:** Ensuring young people's involvement is meaningful, not merely symbolic, requires power-sharing and respect for their autonomy.
- **Data Sensitivity:** Protecting confidentiality and avoiding stigmatisation when researching vulnerable groups (e.g., undocumented youth, LGBTQ+ individuals).
- **Sustainability:** Balancing short-term interventions with long-term structural changes, avoiding dependency on external funding or temporary projects.
- **Intersectionality:** Recognising how overlapping identities (e.g., race, gender, class) shape experiences of social difficulty, avoiding one-size-fits-all solutions.

6. Examples of Research for Action

- **Community-Based Projects:** A participatory study in a marginalised neighbourhood identifies lack of recreational spaces as a risk factor for youth delinquency. Young people co-design a community centre with workshops on conflict resolution and job skills.
- **Policy-Oriented Research:** A study on youth unemployment in rural areas reveals gaps in public transport and training programmes. Findings inform a regional policy to subsidise transport and expand vocational courses.
- **Digital Interventions:** Research on cyberbullying leads to a school-based programme combining peer education, parental workshops, and reporting

mechanisms.

Research for action thus bridges the gap between theory and practice, ensuring interventions are evidence-based, contextually relevant, and centred on the agency of young people. Its success hinges on collaboration, reflexivity, and a commitment to social transformation.