

Title: MEANINGS AND PEDAGOGY OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVISM

Authors

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- (3) This work was supported by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), through the individual research grant PD/BD/135472/2017

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Abstract

Work as a place of activism is a vast field to be explored in adult education research, particularly within educational, social and community intervention with people in situations of vulnerability. This presentation aims to share the results of a qualitative study, with interviews to 12 professional activists working in this field in Portugal, that aimed to explore the meanings of professional activism and to unveil the richness of activists' learning processes and outcomes. A thematic analysis of their sharing, reveals a vision of professional activism as a praxis that promotes and is guided by a sense of (in)justice, which demands a positioning in defense of the people with whom professionals work, leading to interventions oriented by/for a utopian ideal of transformation. The results also show that professional activism is learned in action, informally and tacitly, as a shared experience, implying cognitive, relational and affective investment and gains. As professionals politicize and learn how to become activists, they also construct this praxis, and even construct themselves as professionals, giving meaning to, and (re)defining, their activist craft and professional role, through a dynamic learning-creative process.

Keywords: Professional activism; Educational/social/community intervention; Radical adult education.