

The "lonja" (premises that young people rent to spend their time in) has become the leisure area of choice in the Basque Country: 62,000 young people share their free time in these premises

according to a new publication by the Basque Youth Observatory: 'Lonjas and youth centres in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country'.

The seventh issue of the *Basque Youth Trends* collection includes a topic on *Lonjas and youth centres in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country*, prepared by a team from the Basque Youth Observatory.

With this study, the Basque Youth Observatory aims to provide information on this trend that, according to the data collected in the pages of this report, is here to stay.

The publication highlights that sharing free time in a "lonja" requires a level of responsibility and autonomy. Responsibility, because the members enter into a commitment to limit noise in the neighbourhood, and autonomy, because sharing a space with other people requires setting out rules and regulations and performing certain tasks for the benefit of the group.

"Lonjas" have become a social phenomenon that is clearly connected with the need to share time with friends and the more or less new "need" to find forms of "semi-emancipation" while still cohabiting with the family.

As this research shows, "lonjas" are not isolated pockets of community dynamics. In fact, it could become a structure used by the institutions or through social initiatives to reach out to young people who gather at these premises, which are perhaps not open to society but that are visible and, in certain cases, accessible.

We have included some data that can be found in the report:

- ✓ The phenomenon of the "lonjas" and youth centres is widespread in the Basque Country: 20% of young people have a "lonja" and another 27% would like to.
- ✓ They go to the "lonjas" mainly through a desire to have a place of their own, beyond the control of adults and safe from the weather. A place to be with friends.
- ✓ There are more boys than girls involved in "lonjas". Most are students who live at home with their parents and are 21 years old on average.
- ✓ While most "lonjas" accept boys and girls, it is striking that 23% are exclusively for boys.
- ✓ They usually consist of more than 15 members and almost half of the "lonjas" are used by more than one group to share expenses.
- ✓ People go to the "lonja" mainly at weekends and they are used as meeting points, the group's reference point.
- ✓ The rules are agreed among all members and they assume responsibility for the maintenance of the premises and coexistence with the neighbours.

- ✓ Three in ten say they have had problems with the neighbours, which may be one reason for the high level of mobility of the premises.
- ✓ As for the role city councils should play in this field, most young people support the idea that city councils should mediate in the event of issues related to coexistence with neighbours.

The research is based on a telephone survey conducted between November 23 and December 4, 2012 involving a representative sample of young people in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country aged 15 to 29. The publication, in addition to the analysis of the main results, provides the questionnaire used and the possibility of consulting all the data collected, disaggregated into five variables: province of residence, sex, age group, size of the municipality and experience regarding "lonjas".

Follow us on the social networks!

