

# AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE PROCESS IN ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH

A challenge for people from social co-responsibility

## SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE LAAM



SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES  
INTERNATIONAL

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REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## KEY USERS

Mandatory for:	Member Associations and General Secretariat of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAAM)
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## RELATED POLICIES

Fundamental policy:	Policy Programme
Main policy:	Child Protection Policy Gender Equality Policy Formal Education Policy Policy on the Inclusion of Children with Disabilities
Quality standards:	Manual for the SOS Children's Village Family Strengthening Programmes Manual

## DOCUMENTS, TOOLS, RELATED SYSTEMS

Preliminary Fascicle of Adolescents and Young People in LAAM
Fascicle I of Adolescents and Young People in LAAM: Youths Approach
Fascicle II of Adolescents and Young People in LAAM: Biopsychosocial Development
Support Document to Achieve Gender Equality
Causes and risks of the loss of the family care in Latin America and the Caribbean
Code of Conduct
Human Resources Manual

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## DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

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## 1. Presentation

In Fascicle 2 “Biopsychosocial development in adolescence and youth. An approach from integrality to promote social and emotional well-being”, the review and reconstruction of identity was mentioned as one of the great challenges that adolescents and young people face in this vital phase, from where they seek to know who they are, as an individual and autonomous being, differentiated from the people who have been significant referents in their lives, and from where, not only relationships are established with themselves, with other people and with the environment, but from problems are solved, decisions are made and a sense of orientation is built toward the future.

In this way, every adolescent and young person develops an exploration of herself/himself to walk toward processes of independence, autonomy and emancipation. Without altering that this represents the experience of conflict (sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit), between the desire of independence and the need for security and protection offered by the family or environments where care has been found<sup>1</sup>, at the same time that tensions and paradoxes among the social pressures for the assumption of autonomous and independent responsibilities and the limited opportunities to be inserted to an increasingly competitive, saturated and disadvantaged market, especially for young people (in terms of social guarantees and protection).

As stated by the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the face of current challenges it is difficult to analyze, understand and accompany transitions to adulthood, precisely in a context and social, cultural, political and economic conditions marked by the early expulsion of minors from the educational system, the existence of child labor, the increase in the informal self-employment, early maternity and paternity and family outreach in which several family groups live in the same domestic unit due to the precarious economic conditions.<sup>2</sup>

For this reason, in the present Fascicle, these processes and complex challenges faced by adolescents and young people are precisely reviewed in the exploration and definition of possible paths of life that will enable them to make a transition toward adulthood in a socio-economic context characterized by a high uncertainty, which often make difficult and even contradict, not only the dreams and desires of adolescents and young people in the region, but even, the expectations from the adult world.

## 2. The development of progressive autonomy and life skills

During adolescence and youth, there is a progressive process of individuation (not individualization)\* in people, which leads them step by step to the consolidation of their identity, which in turn establishes the possibility of building psychological autonomy and subsequently economic autonomy, necessary to face the challenges of adulthood.

Based on the formulation of ideals and own reasoning, the exploration around possible life paths and possible meanings of life and the subsequent establishment of a personal commitment to these aspects

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\* The individuation is the process by which a person is an individual; in other words, it is recognized as a whole with particularities that make him/her unique in the midst of the community and of the others. It is about the process in which it is to be oneself and are aware of that sameness in relation to the others. It does not referred to the separation of the collectivity, but to the recognition that, being part of the collectivity, every subject is an individual with his/her own ideas, motivations, feelings, needs for self-realization, desires, etc. In other words, it does not refer to a selfish individualization and therefore does not lead to individualism.

of life, the adolescents and young people make decisions aimed at the definition and construction of possible and autonomous life projects.

The process by which the adolescents and young people build their autonomy is complex, as it must articulate at the same time, processes of identification with other people along with processes of differentiation from them, all within a socio-historical contextual framework in which the autonomy and independence are gestated.<sup>3</sup> **Based on this differentiation with respect to the others and the development of identity, it is possible for adolescents and young people the consolidation of their autonomy and the construction of life projects, although they start from their interests and needs, these are somehow related and limited by the socio-cultural context in which they are immersed.**

This process, not only is progressive, as its development underpins in the various achievements and occasions that the same process of growth and biopsychosocial development is reaching and offering, but it is located contextually in a historical social, economic, political and cultural scenario that establishes precisely, the opportunities and constraints from which people can develop, to a greater or lesser extent, their potential, skills, abilities and perspectives toward the future.

### 2.1. How to understand the progressive autonomy?

Progressive autonomy constitutes, not only an inherent quality to the dignity of the human person, but also a fundamental guiding principle of the status of subject of rights of children and adolescents. This substantive citizenship status is going to evolve along with the gradual consolidation of identity, which is represented as a free construction and a free choice of the life options, always in congruence with the set of values, beliefs or attitudes defined as own and unique, and aimed at self-realization and the full exercise of the rights and freedom.<sup>4</sup>

#### Progressive autonomy

This concept implies that, to the extent that the person grows and progresses in the development of his/her capacities, he/she is taking control and therefore, exercising freedom and responsibility about his/her life and the various areas of personal skills that have not previously been assumed by caregivers or the State, in its function of protection and guardianship.<sup>5</sup>

It is expected that as part of the development of the progressive autonomy, people can come to fend for themselves, once they have passed by the youth phase, which means that they rely on their own feelings and intuitions for decision-making; defend and value their ideas and projects; as well as they build the conditions to achieve the goals and aspirations which will enable them to achieve economic autonomy (access to housing, access to a decent work with the conditions that will enable them to sustain their personal needs, develop other projects, among others).<sup>6</sup>

However, for young people to achieve this transition, **it is necessary that social and institutional conditions exist and can facilitate the necessary opportunities to enable the person: the development of their identity, differentiation of the family references and environments of care, and finally, the exploration and development of their capabilities and personal skills**, which in turn allow them to build their own biography of transition towards independence and psychological and practical autonomy.<sup>7 8</sup>

In this sense, although the autonomy has a dimension linked to self-determination, and therefore is associated with a rationality focused in the individuals and their interests, it also incorporates both a normative dimension, related to an inter-subjective rationality (exchange of reasons and expectations with other people) and another contextual dimension, related to the vulnerability (alterations or disorders of social nexus oriented to well-being, development and construction of autonomy) and even the opportunities that a context provides for the development and achievement of that autonomy.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the position the people occupy in society –which is not the exclusive result of circumstances, efforts and individual decisions– also sets the breadth of possibilities for achieving autonomy.<sup>10</sup>

Social capital is another aspect that determines the possibilities that adolescents and young people have to develop skills and find spaces of opportunities for achieving their progressive autonomy. This social capital is understood as the set of relationships based on trust and behaviors of cooperation and reciprocity that makes it easy for people to meet their economic, social and emotional needs. Family, community and social support networks are part of this capital and include family members, caregivers, friends, professional educators and organizational technical teams that work with adolescents and young people, business mentors, among others.<sup>11</sup>

Autonomy could only be achieved under social conditions that potentiate it, which promotes the full exercise of citizenship and that seek equality in the availability and utilization of opportunities for the development of capacities for such autonomy. Therefore, **it is required that the state, institutional and organizational management of policies and programmes promote the autonomy of individuals, as well as protection against their vulnerabilities.**<sup>12</sup>

Thus, in the youth phase of development, people face the challenge of building personal biographical bases and the possible trajectories of their lives, in the midst of a tension between individual autonomy and social dependence<sup>13</sup>. In this process it is crucial to be able to trust our feelings and intuitions for decision-making, defend what we believe and consider our projects as valuable.

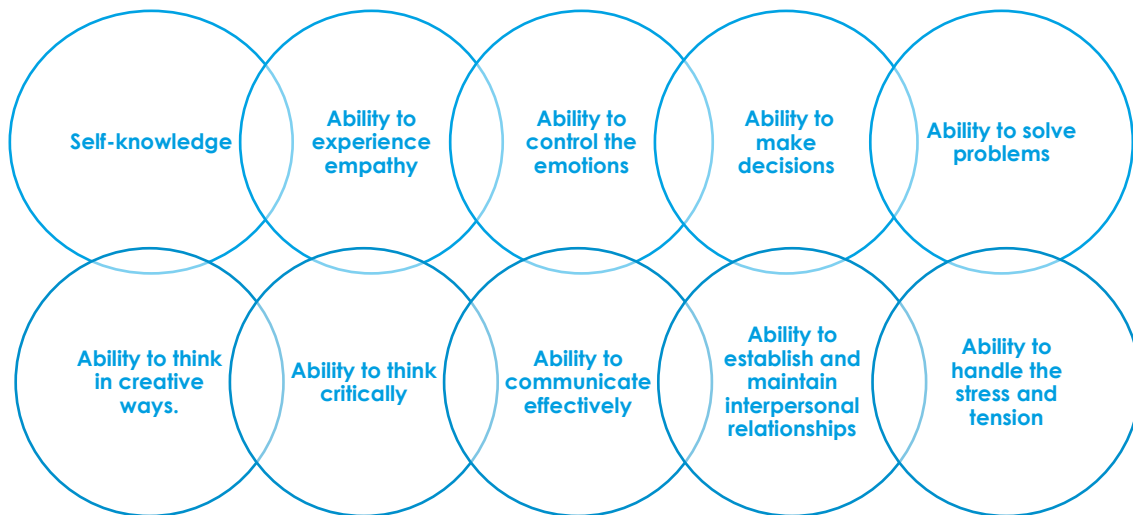
## 2.2. The development of life skills for the processes of autonomy and independence

As already indicated, the autonomy and independence processes of the adolescent and young person require the development of skills and competencies that allow them to move forward in the definition and consolidation of their life trajectory and projects. In this way, the autonomy and independence go through the possibility of permanently learn, which includes the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes that allow adolescents to define, plan and execute actions oriented to the achievement of their own goals.<sup>14</sup>

### Life skills

Set of competencies considered as generic, that enable the person to face challenges and solve vital and daily problems, among which are those that are developed in the interpersonal field.

The research conducted in the field of human development, as well as the criteria of international organizations dealing with the development of adolescents and young people, have identified the following as essential life skills<sup>15</sup>:



In this sense, the projection of the future of adolescents and young people, the construction of their life projects and, in general, the definition of possible trajectories that come near to their autonomy, are linked to the resolution of conflicts and tensions that arise between the need of dependence and the desires and expectations of independence.

However, the gradual resolution of these tensions and conflicts is facilitated by the accompaniment of adults and entities that support the practical preparation of adolescents and young people through the development of these essential skills for independent living. These skills could be divided into two types:

1. **Tangible skills:** include education, vocation, the ability to search for employment or find housing, as well as the skills related to consumption (for example, money management).
2. **Intangible Skills:** include building more complex skills, less specific and therefore more difficult to measure, such as the decision-making process, the planning capacity, the ability to communicate effectively and assertively, self-esteem linked to the self-knowledge and broader social skills (empathy for example).<sup>16</sup>

It should be noted, from a perspective of sustainable human development and equality, that the development of these capabilities is not only a necessary aspect for the processes of autonomy and personal independence, but it also **constitutes the opportunity to transform the reality in which these young people develop, by strengthening adolescents and young people in their capacities to be agents of their own development, but also of community, organizational and social development**; in other words, to also be productive agents of structural change of reality and oriented to the overcoming and reduction of structural gaps and inequalities in the development of capabilities.

However, the processes of development and strengthening of these life skills, should be oriented to the possibility of extending the options of building life trajectories and future projects of adolescents and young people, starting precisely from their interpersonal differences and the heterogeneity of their unique biographies. For this reason, aspects such as age, gender, schooling, support networks and family, social stratum and the place of origin, are part of the factors that must be taken into account in planning and executing processes of life skills development with adolescents and young people.<sup>17</sup>

### 3. Life trajectories and life projects

Adolescents and young people, should be considered as protagonists agents of their lives and as historical subjects located at a specific time and place, facing the challenge of integrating and give meaning to their experiences, opportunities, desires, rational choices, emotions, abilities and expectations of the future, in the exploration and definition of possible life trajectories and projects that shape their future and their transition to adulthood<sup>18</sup>.

#### Life trajectories

This concept precisely refers to the complex and dialectical interaction between the individual and the social-structural areas, between the subjective conditions and the political, social, economic, cultural, family conditions that establish opportunities or impose constraints to the subject.<sup>19</sup> It is, therefore, a concept that refers to the singularity (not the individuality) of each biography, that takes us away from static conceptions of the people's lives and reductionist views that hold the responsibility on the person that lives this process and the social myths that blame people from the conception that "where there is a will, there is a way" and that "we are all equal and compete on equal terms".

Various studies have highlighted the importance of the structural environment in which young people live in the definition of their life trajectories, which differ according to the political, cultural, social, institutional, family and economic environment in which young people have developed<sup>20</sup>.

The social changes of recent decades, particularly in the crisis and the depletion of the Welfare State and in the world of work, have generated significant ruptures in the trajectories of persons, which used to be much more predictable and more or less stable, as a manifestation of linear equations in which, for example, if a person had reached a high level of education, he/she ensured a stable job with good wage conditions, with guarantees and social security that allows him/her to be part of a group or social class, which in turn established conditions to ensure life trajectories to his/her offspring with a high degree of certainty.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, the evidence indicates that in the case of young people leaving care environments that are part of the protection systems, the processes of autonomy and independence tend to occur earlier in relation to young people of other social groups<sup>22</sup>, as well as it is more common that these processes are not anticipated by the discharge based on the age of majority or expulsion when they are not prepared<sup>23</sup>, which affects their life trajectories and the scarcity of resources and competencies they have to undertake these processes properly. **These ruptures and the resulting uncertainty have imposed the need for much deeper and exhaustive analysis, to consider the conditions, situations and processes that have intervened and could participate in the growth and development of the people, throughout its individual history and in the various development scenarios and environments of care.**

It is in the phase of adolescence and youth where dreams (we could say ethereal) of childhood, become life projects for people, so that the exploration, construction, and the definition of the same are a central aspect, which, however, depend in some way of the trajectories experienced. In other words, the people's life trajectories until the adolescence and youth will be a framework that limits, makes it difficult or potentiate the determined characteristics of the possible life trajectories on the horizon for the future.



### 3.1. Relevant social changes that have altered the life trajectories

Current research about adolescents and young people have been demonstrated consistently that nowadays there is a significant amount of social changes that are associated with a "de-standardization" of their life trajectories and, consequently, a significant diversity in terms of the forms and modes of transition to adulthood.<sup>24</sup>

Until the end of the 20th century, the trajectories of human life and, particularly, the transition of adolescents and youth to adulthood was fairly structured from the social position they occupied in the socio-economic stratification of a specific society where they developed. This transition structured in sequential and synchronized moments, in general terms, provided people a route that went from education (space for development established by excellence within the conception of social moratorium explained in Fascicle 1) to employment, to later achieve the exit from home, the establishment of a couple and a family with the consequent assumption of parental responsibilities. All those people who did not respond to this biographical logic, in some way were considered as part of problematic or non-adapted populations from the social and cultural norm.<sup>25</sup>

From the beginning of the 21st century until our days, **there have been multiple processes and political, social and economic changes that have impacted the economies and local institutional structures in the vast majority of countries, but with greater intensity in developing countries**, where inequality has grown and people are more vulnerable in a more heterogeneous and more competitive social world. Some of these changes are linked to the instability of the capitalist economic system and its impact on the destabilization and precarization of labor spheres in the context of a society increasingly oriented toward consumption and toward processes of individualization, fragmentation, exclusion and disintegration of the social sphere, which in turn generates complex social problems.<sup>26</sup>

**4 out of 10  
young  
people**

According to ECLAC data, four out of ten young people from 20 to 24 years old fails to complete secondary education, which in turn makes it difficult for them to access quality jobs that will generate enough income to break the vicious cycle of reproduction of poverty<sup>27</sup>.

Of course, next to these processes of change not so positive, there have also been relevant changes that paradoxically have enabled societies to advance in the recognition of specific rights and population groups historically violated (including children, adolescents and young people); in the development of new forms of relationship between men and women, between generations and between civil society and the state; in more inclusive practices and plurals for the full exercise of citizenship and democracy; in the development of technologies that offer immense possibilities for knowledge, learning, communication, information, exchange and support of multiple social actors from different latitudes for addressing social problems through interconnections in real time, among other aspects.<sup>28</sup>

All these processes of change (positive and negative) have impacted without any doubt the conditions and opportunities in which people develop, providing not only new and diverse forms of identity multi-centralized, as well as various forms and possibilities for development, but, at the same time, have destabilized the structures and traditional normative references (particularly education and work) and **have established the uncertainty as a structural condition which in turn generates existential paths toward autonomy and independence that are more unstructured, diffuse, non-linear, de-synchronized, heterogeneous and individualized.**<sup>29 30 31 32 33</sup>

In fact, international agencies and researchers of the status and situation of adolescents and young people in Latin America and the Caribbean have been pointing out that these population is facing a series of tensions and paradoxes that hinder the realization of their autonomy and independence, for which there are wide expectations, but fewer options to realize them. For example, although there are notorious regional developments in the field of education, which has generated a significant amount of young people educated, trained and prepared to contribute to the development of their countries, the chances of finding work are also increasingly uncertain.<sup>34 35 36</sup>



The data demonstrate –as evidence of these difficulties faced by adolescents and young people to take advantage of development opportunities and achieve their autonomy– that **the population that neither study nor work** has increased, which not only belongs mostly to women of poor and vulnerable households with incomes that are below average, but fail to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality.<sup>37</sup>

In this way, in the face of this new order and *glocal* context (global and local), nowadays young people are looking for ways to determine alternatives and various life projects, achieve their autonomy and develop their identity, both the linear and structured sequences that established society, from the pre-existing conditions and expectations in the history.<sup>38</sup>

This forces us to rethink and redefine the role and alternatives of action of the adult world and entities, to facilitate the inclusion and educational labor, the development of the autonomy and independence, as well as the well-being of adolescents and young people, always taking the heterogeneity of the life trajectories of this population group as diverse.

### 3.2. From the traditional view of "Life Project" to the approach of "A life with meaning and projects"

The transition from childhood and adolescence to adulthood was historically understood as a linear and homogeneous process in people's lives, who passed through various moments in which they lived the loss of some roles and the assumption of other defined at the social and cultural level (education, employment, economic and residential independence, marriage and fatherhood/motherhood). In this sense, the emancipation and autonomy process of adolescents and young people were concentrated in the adolescent phase, in the development of the separation and individuation of their caregiver figures, in the exploration of interests and desires, in the achievement of their identity and the definition of a life project that materialized a life trajectory chosen with a perspective of the future.<sup>39</sup>

As it was mentioned before, in recent decades, there have been changes to the social, economic, cultural and institutional arrangements that have been considerably modified the vision and the logic of the trajectories of adolescents and young people, making them more flexible, more diffuse and indeterminate, more heterogeneous and plural, as well as more uncertain. All this has forced a new conceptualization of the development process of the identity, autonomy and independence.

Continue to pose as a central task of the process of autonomy and independence, the choice (as if all people could choose) of a life project (in singular), as a univocal meaning of life and the future of the people who go through this phase of the vital course, not only is reduced and limiting, but is far from the reality that many of them live today.

**Adolescents and young people today, particularly those living in difficult, constraint and vulnerable structural conditions, face –as one of the main challenges of the transition to adult life– the not always easy articulation of the reality principle (what can I do?), the duty principle (what should I do?) and the desire principle (what do I want to do?).**<sup>40 41</sup> They face the paradoxes of development which, on the one hand, greater options to improve the quality of life, particularly in the dimension of consumption and material well-being, but at the same time, offers fewer opportunities of access to these opportunities, which makes the decision-making process relating to the vocation, the labor insertion, welfare or even the assumption of personal and family responsibilities.<sup>42</sup>

The truth is that the uncertainty of today, forces adolescents and young people to think about various possible scenarios; flexibility and plurality of possibilities allows them to think about simultaneously running various life projects; the unequal conditions and limited opportunities for some social groups more than others, set reality conditions that are not always chosen or planned; the need for human fulfillment that transcends the vocation, work, occupation or a family project requires of adolescents their greater willingness to search for and build a **life with meaning and diverse projects**.

Thus, it does not seem possible or appropriate to continue expecting that adolescents and young people can adjust their transition to adulthood to the normative expectations that defined autonomy and independence as the achievement resulting from the acquisition of residential independence (exit from the family home or care environment to live in a place of their own), entry into the labor market and economic independence (completion of studies, choice of a career and job placement) and the formation of an own family nucleus (constitution of a couple and the birth of daughters and sons).<sup>43</sup>

As a result, the accompaniment of the processes of autonomy and independence must:

- ① be based on specific learning opportunities on these processes and cannot be developed from rigid, normative and homogeneous criteria of success and failure.
- ② pay special attention to the development of identity and subjectivity, not from a perspective of individualization but of differentiation and recognition of one's own senses and meanings of the experience, one's own motivation, one's own strengths and interests.
- ③ develop capacities to manage uncertainty, to cope with the changes and to articulate from identity and self-realization the principles of reality, duty and pleasure, to have critical and autonomous judgment against hegemonic cultural models, to build projects in consistency with the sense of life, to participate socially in a spontaneous or organized manner as a way of actively exercising citizenship, transform the reality and build more just and equitable societies that respect human dignity, to enter the world of work as part of the integral and interpersonal development and one more way of achieving and contributing to the collective.<sup>44 45 46 47 48</sup>

#### 4. The role of education and training in the development of autonomy and independence

As it has been pointed out by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of the United Nations, it is necessary to affirm that education is a human right, while an indispensable means for the exercise of other rights. Without learning, neither the development of people or societies as a whole could not be facilitated, nor could it improve people's quality of life.<sup>49</sup>



Recent studies have relieved the fundamental role that have the development of capacities and skills through formal education in the processes of social inclusion of adolescents and young people and in the breakdown of the circle of reproduction and intergenerational transmission of poverty. These studies have shown that more years of schooling extend the possibilities of access to better opportunities for labor insertion, while strengthening the skills of young people and adolescents to participate more actively and with a leading role in the development of democratic, complex, pluralistic and globalized societies in which they now live.<sup>50</sup>

Precisely for these reasons, but also because it is a fundamental human right, States and societies must ensure universal access to education for all people, to a quality education that, taking into account the different characteristics and conditions of the adolescent and youth population (socioeconomic, gender, origin, ethnic, learning rhythms and skills, abilities, interests and motivations), is oriented to integral development and the full exercise of citizenship (within which the social participation is key); to the development of skills and abilities for life; to the full development and valuation of the identity; to the appropriation and production of scientific, cultural, aesthetic, technological and political knowledge that allows them to operate in a changing world; the development of attitudes that allow harmonious, dialogical and respectful coexistence in the midst of diversity and plurality; to the strengthening of practical tools to manage the uncertainty in the process of construction and development of their life trajectories.<sup>51 52</sup>

It is clear that access to quality education and all educational opportunities that are oriented to integral development, should consider the configuration and adaptation of educational spaces, pedagogical strategies, didactic practices, methodologies and educational supports, to the characteristics, needs, rhythms, learning styles and conditions of adolescents and young people in the teaching-learning process. This is particularly important for those adolescents and young people who have experienced conditions of vulnerability or traumatic situations that have affected or limit their cognitive development, their emotional stability, their behavioral regulation, their motivation for learning, among other aspects associated with learning. Faced with these particularities, the development of skills and abilities for life through education, must often consider specialized educational strategies that ensure a comprehensive response tailored to people in their particularity.

In this sense, although international organizations have recognized that in Latin America and the Caribbean there have been important educational advances that favor adolescents and young people, such as the universalization of primary education and the massification of secondary education (such as evidence of this, it may be indicated that in all Latin American countries, with the exception of Nicaragua, the first section of secondary education is mandatory, while the last section has been defined as mandatory in 12 of these 19 countries), there are still many challenges that are evidenced in low completion rates of secondary education and very limited access of young people to higher levels of

education (whether university or technical-professional) due, fundamentally, to the need of these people and their families to obtain income to improve their quality of life and well-being. <sup>53</sup>



The data show that in our region, approximately:

**21%** of the young people between the ages of 15 and 17 years old and **32%** of those who are between 18 and 24 years old, are not enrolled in school and interrupted their formal studies during adolescence, even before they reach the average level of high school.

**8%** of these people is still trying to finish the level of secondary school, **36%** per cent completed his secondary education, although not continued studying in higher studies and only **25%** of the young people managed to get and stay in the studies of higher level. <sup>54</sup>

The above data is alarming and persistent, only reflect that the educational dropout occurs with particular intensity during adolescence and that young people hardly resume their studies during that phase of its vital course. It must be added also that, in the midst of this process of social exclusion that has not been reversed, there are groups of adolescents and young people who are even more vulnerable in relation to the exercise of the right to education, such is the case of indigenous peoples who have fewer years of schooling and receive a lower quality education<sup>55</sup> in this line the data indicate that:



One-fifth of the 163 millions of young people living in Latin America and the Caribbean work in **informal jobs**, whereas a proportion equivalent **is not employed, not studying, or not receiving training**. <sup>56</sup>

#### 4.1. Professional, vocational and occupational guidance

As noted, education comprises a broad set of learning and training processes, through which people develop their skills and abilities, enrich their knowledge and improve their technical or professional skills to meet their own production, consumption needs and of citizen exercise (not only material ones but also those related to self-realization, the development of identity and active participation in society), as well as those of their families, care environments, communities, reference groups and society as a whole. For these reasons, education should be a substantive part of the promotion of equal opportunities and human development with equity.<sup>57</sup>

In this perspective, **the Orientation must be understood as a process of accompaniment that, in order to be relevant, must be provided permanently throughout the life course of all people, beyond the formal educational scenarios and must be promoted to his/her self-realization.** It must be more than an administrative or bureaucratic requirement, a process inherent in the formation and integral development of people, which allows them to identify at any time of their lives, their abilities, abilities, competences and interests as a basis for decision making in the management of their life trajectory, particularly in the areas of education, learning, training and employment. Therefore, in addition to being dynamic, flexible, integral and with a proactive and transforming nature, it must be adjusted to the individual characteristics of the people subject to orientation.<sup>58</sup>

The orientation as a process, although it may be aimed at articulating the three principles mentioned in previous paragraphs (reality, duty and desire) and articulating the strengths and opportunities (personal determinants) in relation to their weaknesses and threats from abroad (its social determinants) to choose

a career in vocational training or an occupation, must be conceived primarily as a process of self-knowledge, growth, development, planning, construction and maturation that leads adolescents and young people to know themselves and respond, from information about itself and its environment, to four basic questions:

- ④ Who am I? (self-knowledge, identity, characteristics and personal determinants)
- ④ Where am I? (social determinants)
- ④ What can I do? (decision making)
- ④ How can I do it? (life, vocational, professional or occupational projects).<sup>59</sup>



It is important to remember that the youth phase is characterized by a broad, deep and intense experience of changes, by the development of identity and self-esteem, the strengthening of the sense of belonging, the elaboration of possible life trajectories and life projects. Besides, significant proportions of the population live this vital phase in circumstances of particular vulnerability (often outside the educational system or care environments), which makes it especially difficult to face the present challenges to develop their full potential and perspective of future, so the support that young people receive in the framework of specialized guidance processes, are of vital importance.<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, in our current societies where, as it has been explained, the life trajectories are more diffuse, complex, plural and uncertain, it is of vital importance that the orientation is not carried out as a punctual professional consultancy activity, but rather to be develop **as processes through which adolescents and young people learn to make decisions while strengthening their ability to take each decision as a step in their life trajectory and in relation to their meaning and life projects, in such a way that can respond to the needs of people and the requirements of the world, which are constantly changing.**

In this way, the role of professional people who develop orientation processes with adolescents and young people should be as advisors and facilitators of processes of change and strengthen capacities for adaptation and coping with situations and conditions that allow people subject to the orientation to be, grow, feel, act, decide and build their own life projects, including vocational, professional and occupational projects. From this perspective, guidance should favor the satisfaction of three types of basic needs:

- ④ **Personal and vocational:** relating to those elements of reflection that adolescents and young people require to mature personally and vocationally, and which are associated with self-knowledge, information on the socio-labor, career planning, the decision-making process, job search skills, etc.
- ④ **Educational:** referring to the elements that prepare adolescents and young people for the transition and assumption of an adult life and that are linked to life skills such as assertive and effective communication, teamwork, initiative, leadership, habits of work, etc.
- ④ **Social:** referred to those elements that allow them to face, in the most active and favorable way possible, adverse situations such as unemployment. Among them, there are the ability to learn, flexibility and versatility, the ability to adapt and renewal, the knowledge management, among others.<sup>61</sup>

## 4.2. Financial education

Being that all people are inserted in an economic context and are part of a production-consumption system, in which we engage in transactions and financial operations of various types, it is of vital importance, as part of the processes of building autonomy and independence of the transition to adulthood, to understand this context and how the economic dimension relates and affects other dimensions of human development in societies, while developing attitudes, skills and financial skills for the proper use and responsible for the economic resources to which one has access, the generation and maintenance of good habits of consumption and use of money, always in correspondence with the senses, trajectories and personal life projects.<sup>62</sup>

### Financial Education

It is the process by which people improve their understanding of financial products, concepts and risks, and, through information, instruction and/or objective advice, develop the skills and confidence to be more aware of the risks and financial opportunities, make informed decisions, know where to go for help and take any effective action to improve their economic well-being<sup>63</sup>.

In this way, adolescents and young people can learn and develop, through a practical knowledge, competencies to rationally manage their income and make informed and appropriate decisions for that economic and financial administration, according to their needs, possibilities and economic contexts, which are empowered as citizen's financial statements and not merely as thoughtless consumers.<sup>64 65</sup>

This is increasingly important in unstable economic contexts, which may require people to make sudden adjustments and decisions in the daily life and at specific moments of their life trajectory. For this reason, adolescents and young people must develop knowledge and skills that allow them to manage their finances in such a way that they can, from it, build and maintain their well-being, their quality of life and achieve those goals and objectives in the medium and long term, which are part of their life trajectories and projects chosen.

Although the existing evidence on the impact of financial education with children, adolescents and young people in the region is still scarce, the research carried out so far suggests that there is a significant correlation among the education, financial culture and the level of life of people, in such a way that at a higher educational level, greater knowledge about personal finances, which is reflected in turn in a better management of financial products, investment decision making, higher levels of income, among others.<sup>66</sup> For this reason, the education system, organizations that accompany the development of adolescents and young people and environments of care, should generate conscious and planned initiatives for financial education.

In addition, it has been pointed out that financial education could help adolescents and young people to make appropriate decisions not only in the economic sphere, but also in other areas of their lives, since it requires the development of skills and strategies for planning, decision making and problem solving, skills that are required in the same way in other areas of knowledge. All this can increase the security and optimism to develop life projects.

This is why it is pointed out that, **financial education (particularly if it is developed from early ages and as part of the curricula of formal education) is a key element for the optimization of financial inclusion, understood as a multidimensional concept which includes greater access to better financial products and services, as well as better use of them as part of exercising the rights and responsibilities of people as financial consumers.**<sup>67 68 69</sup>

Although, as has been pointed out, financial education can be a space for the development of skills and the creation of opportunities, it cannot be forgotten that there are significant population groups that are victims of processes of social exclusion and that therefore, they also have fewer opportunities to access this knowledge and learning processes that allow them to develop the skills included in what we call financial education, which establishes a major challenge in the social responsibility of optimizing social inclusion.

## 5. The youth employability: between employment and entrepreneurship

### 5.1. Youth employment

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has defined the concept of work as the set of human activities, which can be remunerated or not, which produce goods or services in an economy; and it distinguishes it from employment insofar as it covers only work performed in exchange for payment. This payment can be from a salary, salary, commissions, tips, piece rates or even payments in kind. Within this conceptualization, the ILO also recognizes that employment can be dependent-salaried or independent-self-employment.

<p><b>Decent Employment</b></p>	<p>The ILO has raised this concept as the work that dignifies and allows for the development of people's capabilities, that is to say, decent employment is the one that respects fundamental principles and rights at work, which guarantees a fair remuneration and proportional to the effort made, without discrimination of any kind, as well as the being carried out with social protection.</p>
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Particularly on what employment means in the youth phase, it should be said that in this moment of life the aspirations and motivations to work have not necessarily been clearly specified, so it is common to explore different jobs, occupations and working conditions. Some youth can also afford this exploration because they have fewer family commitments and can count on help from their care settings.<sup>70</sup>

As indicated above, the development processes of autonomy and independence as part of the life trajectory during the youth phase are complex and very diverse, and it is not possible to determine that a single factor or process solves everything. However, it should be noted that a decent job allows economic autonomy in the person, as well as the development of multiple personal abilities and skills, which contribute to the process of independence of care environments.

However, the opportunities and quality of employment that adolescents and young adults have access in the current context, establish a challenging landscape for the region and its states.

<p><b>Youth unemployment is triple that of the adults' one</b></p>	<p>Data from ILO indicate that youth unemployment has increased and although there are important differences among countries, the unemployment rate of young people between the 15 and 24 years old in Latin America and the Caribbean averages three times the unemployment rate of adults.<sup>71</sup> For the year 2017, unemployment of young people reached <b>18.3%</b>.<sup>72</sup></p>
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It is also worth mentioning that some young people are forced to start their working lives in adolescence, which imposes the challenge of making studies compatible with employment. Despite the many initiatives in the region to protect minors and eradicate child labor, in many countries of the region, adolescent work is informal in most cases and is carried out in the worst terms.<sup>73</sup>



Young people not only face greater difficulties in getting a job, but when they do get it, they tend to be jobs of lower quality, in which they even receive wages below the average, in some cases despite having greater competencies than those requested to fill the position. Thus, in addition to their unemployment is greater than that of adults, as mentioned above, also among those who have a job, **informality is significantly higher than that of adults (61.3% vs. 44.2%)**. These gaps in access to employment are even greater in young women.<sup>74 75 76</sup>

On the other hand, it is possible to observe the deterioration of the quality of jobs available to young people in the **progressive expansion of temporary employment and the shorter term of the contracts**. In this sense, the big question is whether this type of work facilitates the transition to permanent employment, or if –on the contrary– it exposes young people to temporary jobs with alternating periods of unemployment.<sup>77</sup> This situation is aggravated when young people have dropped out of school, because they do not have all the skills and requirements necessary to enter formal employment, which forces them to accept temporary and unstable jobs in the informal sector.<sup>78</sup>

However, the current challenge in terms of unemployment for young people who have a higher education diploma cannot be ignored, as this contradicts the assumption and the evidence that higher education and training increase productivity and employability. In addition, unemployed graduates, not being rewarded for their efforts, experience high levels of frustration, which affects multiple dimensions of their lives.<sup>79</sup>

Additionally, the evidence indicates that these challenges are aggravated when dealing with young people who leave from alternative care settings, since they usually face additional difficulties, such as: low educational credentials; lack of support networks and emotional referents, which affects their motivation; low self-esteem when looking for a job, often a product of their life stories; stigmatization during the job search; the need for economic support as a result of anticipated autonomy processes, which may involve them in informal and precarious jobs; and the lack of social networks that allow them to access various quality work opportunities<sup>80</sup>.

All these situations generate precariousness, instability and lack of protection of young people in their trajectories towards autonomy and independence and not only have an individual impact on the development of each young person, but may have long-term consequences in the human and social development of the countries, maintaining, increasing, reproducing and transmitting poverty and vulnerability intergenerationally.<sup>81</sup>

Thus, in order to promote the employability of young people are necessary various actions, at different levels <sup>82 83 84 85 86 87 88</sup>:

- ① It is necessary to strengthen the programmes of non-formal education and training for work, as well as their coverage.
- ① Likewise, secondary education and professional training should allow to explore and aspire to foster and develop in adolescents and young people a wide and diverse range of skills, competences and interests so that they have greater capacities to insert and maintain themselves successfully in the world of work.
- ① It is necessary that the educational opportunities of adolescents and young people recognize the diversity of trajectories and offer the opportunity to make compatible education and work, according to the needs of their labor insertion or to the experiences developed in the different stages of their life.

- ⑦ In this sense, it is necessary to develop a programmatic offer that is variable in terms of duration, substitute modalities and complementary to work (day and evening). It is also appropriate to articulate the programmes of the same area of specialization, in order to be compatible with each other (validation of content between programmes).
- ⑦ Strengthen public-private partnerships to improve the relevance of training programmes in relation to current production structures and their projection for the future.
- ⑦ There must be incentive programmes for formalization, as a basic floor for social protection, employability and job placement, through strategies such as internships, apprenticeships, first job, second chance programmes and youth participation programmes.
- ⑦ It is necessary to promote the participation and citizenship of young people, in such a way, that adult centrism does not neutralize the wide possibilities and potentials that young people offer to the labor market and to society in general.
- ⑦ Public policies must prioritize youth employment, considering its multifactorial and multidimensional causes.
- ⑦ Maintain updated training programmes for the development of technical skills, fundamentally for those adolescents and young people belonging to excluded groups who have left secondary school and do not wish to return.

Finally, it is essential to remember that, together with the social co-responsibility actions that are carried out to improve the skills and possibilities of young people for their insertion and maintenance in the labor market, it is of primary and fundamental importance to guarantee access to employment worthy of young people, not as an end in itself, but ensuring their full development, their social integration and the full exercise of their citizenship, in order to close the educational, social, cultural, gender gaps, ethnicity, among others.

## 5.2. Entrepreneurship, is it an option?

Although there are various ways in which "entrepreneurship", "entrepreneur" or "youth entrepreneurship" have been conceptualized, the following are recognized:

Entrepreneurship	<b>UNESCO</b>	They have used the definition of entrepreneurship proposed by Schoof (2006): "It consists of recognizing the opportunity to create an economic value and the process of acting on that occasion, whether or not it leads to the creation of a new registered company. The concepts of 'innovation' and 'taking risks' are often associated with entrepreneurship, but they are not a necessary condition to define the term". <sup>89</sup>
	<b>ILO</b>	It is conceived as a way in which it is possible to create decent and productive work, and recognizes that particularly for young people developing skills and attitudes towards business, when they are still in the educational system, can contribute to their ability to achieve opportunities of work in circumstances where jobs are scarce. <sup>90</sup>

Entrepreneurship has emerged as an additional strategy that countries have promoted, as an attempt to respond to the situation experienced by many young people, fundamentally the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, who despite having access to job training programmes and services for finding more

and better jobs, they have not been able to insert themselves in the labor market because there is no demand that absorbs the entire offer. In this sense, it has been considered that the entrepreneurship of young people allows improving the employability and social mobility in Latin America and the Caribbean, by increasing their ability to integrate into labor markets, increase and diversify their skills.<sup>91</sup>

However, there are also risks that must be considered and taken care of. One of these risks is related to the fact that if there are no specific competences and if there is not access to all the necessary resources to ensure the success and sustainability of the enterprise (money, technical assistance, networks, social contacts), then the ventures could result in informal and precarious jobs.<sup>92</sup> Also suggests that programmes that promote entrepreneurship could retract the labor market and drop the weight of responsibility for unemployment on the young worker, on their skills, qualifications and attitudes, or their lack of them.<sup>93</sup>

That is why, to ensure that entrepreneurship really contributes to the processes of integral development, autonomy and independence building and improvement of the well-being and quality of life of adolescents and young people, it is proposed to implement complementary socio-labor policies that point to different levels and aspects<sup>94</sup>:

- ⑦ Macroeconomic policies should promote employability, increase decent employment opportunities and improve access to financing, since these elements are what allow the sustainable growth of the private sector and companies, public employment programmes, employment guarantee mechanisms, as well as policies oriented to the transition to formal employment.
- ⑦ Entrepreneurship policies should be directed with priority to those groups of young people in conditions of greater vulnerability, for example, people employed in the informal economy, unemployed people and inactive people.
- ⑦ Entrepreneurship programmes should favor the exercise of fundamental rights at work, in line with national obligations and within the framework of international labor standards, the protection of unionization and collective bargaining rights, compliance with minimum wages, greater participation and youth representation in the different sectors to favor broad social dialogue.

Thus, although entrepreneurship is a more available option for some young people, it is necessary to develop differentiated programmes that address the particular needs of the diversity of young people, also considering that there are no simple and massive solutions to reverse such complex and structural situations such as the youth unemployment. Therefore, it is possible to generate more jobs of better quality, through entrepreneurship, if they are accompanied by complementary socio-labor policies.

## 6. Access to housing: obstacles and opportunities

The leaving care process and the need for housing can respond to very diverse situations that are part of the life trajectories of adolescents and young people and of course their autonomy and independence processes. Thus, for example, they can be the result of the wishes of the adolescent and young person to establish an independent life, desires to establish a cohabitation with a couple or to assume motherhood or fatherhood, desires to take advantage of some training opportunity or have a job that is far from the care environment of origin.

In this way, access to housing would come to be part of the opportunities required to complete autonomy and independence, so that by his counterpart, the difficulties of access to housing will be considered as a situation of blocking the leaving of care, and therefore of its independence and total autonomy.<sup>95</sup>

**Youth unemployment and job insecurity, the lack of access to housing and construction loans, together with the disproportionality among wage incomes and rental or credit costs for purchase or construction of housing, has been generating a large group of people (including youth) that sees access to decent housing impossible.** In this context, it is evident that having a job is not a sufficient guarantee to access a home in the current conditions of the market, which, in turn, affects multiple dimensions of life (study, work, family, etc.) of the young people, directly related to the possibilities of autonomy and independence.

Undoubtedly these difficulties of access to housing, together with youth unemployment and job insecurity, play a significant role in the changes that have occurred in youth transitions and the lengthening of the process of autonomy and independence that has been observed in recent decades, together with the postponement of exiting the home or care setting where young people have grown up.

Particular challenges are observed in this regard for adolescents and young people who leaves alternative care modalities, as they generally face anticipated outflows from the care environment, with weak support networks and without having reached those educational and other conditions that would affect them and allow them to access to decent jobs that ensure the necessary resources to cover all the needs, therefore, even less, to a decent home.

In this sense, considering that it is the responsibility of the State to care for and develop children and adolescents through various protective measures, among which are alternative care and taking into account that life trajectories are presented as a continuum in that the possibilities of future life also depend on the past and present living conditions, as well as the social capital built, it would be convenient for the State to extend support measures for the discharge of young people from alternative care, in such a way that its process of independence and autonomy, as indicated in the Guidelines on Alternative Care Modalities, specifically guideline 136, which is mandatory for States: "Youth should also be provided whose care reaches their end and during their social reintegration access to social, legal and health services and a to adequate financial assistance".<sup>96</sup>

Additionally, as a measure that would allow the implementation of the aforementioned guidelines, and even though they are not binding on the States, it is suggested that national policies ensure that there is continuous planning and support for children, adolescents and young people who leaves alternative care, in which different agencies in charge can participate, for example, for housing, for welfare, for health and for education. It is also suggested to provide a series of different living arrangements and quality housing for people leaving alternative care modalities.<sup>97</sup>

These measures could include the provision of housing bonds or access to temporary subsidized housing, which increases the access of this population in conditions of vulnerability to decent housing.

In line with this challenge, one can refer as a good practice, the experience developed in Argentina and Uruguay for the generation of housing policy initiatives for young people who leave the protection system, which shows that through the articulation between the State and civil society and within the framework of a comprehensive youth development policy, can offer access to subsidized housing (collectively and self-managed) as a means of promoting and facilitating processes of independence and social inclusion of adolescents and young people institutionalized.<sup>98</sup>

## 7. Considerations for the work of SOS Children's Villages

SOS Children's Villages LAAM maintains a firm commitment to guarantee the exercise of the rights of adolescents and young people who have lost the care of their families or are at risk of losing it, while at the same time making visible the responsibility of directing their efforts and actions with quality towards the promotion of the integral development and well-being of these populations.

In this way, at the regional level, a collaborative construction strategy has been proposed between the LAAM Regional Office, the Member Associations and adolescents and young people participating in the SOS Programmes, designed with the aim of promoting the discussion and analysis of reality, the theory and concepts related to Youth Development and jointly build a regional practical-orientation proposal to guide interventions, strategies, plans, projects and actions aimed at adolescents and young people, for which the following guidelines and considerations are proposed:



### **Foster the conditions in programmes to develop progressive autonomy and the construction of independence of adolescents and young participants.**

To achieve this premise, we suggest the following considerations:


- ④ Foster an understanding of the autonomy and independence as continuous and systematic processes, encouraging young people, in an accompanied manner, to progressively assume greater responsibilities and be protagonists in making decisions about their lives.
- ④ Develop pedagogical strategies that promote in the collaborators and families of origin the validation and recognition of the autonomy and independence as an essential part of human development, avoiding reductionist and institutionalized visions.
- ④ Facilitate review processes of institutionalizing practices as an impeding condition of progressive autonomy, such as: standardized responses, transition between Programme units decided on isolated criteria such as age, a particular situation of vulnerability (such as pregnancy) or problematic behaviors, rigid rules and schedules generally imposed vertically, over-protection, inadequate management of control, isolation of peers, family of origin and community, etc.
- ④ Promote tailored specialized responses, from the perspective of youth and the potential of the person, to the promotion of progressive autonomy and independence, taking into account in an integral way aspects such as gender, age, time of development and other circumstances particular of each adolescent and young person.
- ④ In the case of young people who are in alternative care, ensure the accompanying, continuous and comprehensive protocols specialized in the development of progressive autonomy and for the leaving care process from the protection system.
- ④ Design and execute strategies and processes for the promotion of the active and protagonist participation of children, adolescents and young people with respect to the issues that affect their lives, as a fundamental axis of the progressive autonomy, especially in young people who are in modalities of alternative residential care.
- ④ Ensure the community integration of children, adolescents and young people, especially social, community and family integration in institutionalized adolescents and young people.
- ④ Promote the access of adolescents and young people who are in the process of leaving care to existing social, legal, health and financial assistance services.

- Generate advocacy strategies and actions for the creation and execution of legislations for the exit of adolescents and young people from the protection system, which contemplate processes of progressive autonomy and independence (training and education, access to decent work, access to living place).

**PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES OF INTEREST:**  
**Influencing housing alternatives, SOS Children's Villages Uruguay**

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**Description:**  
 SOS Villages Uruguay has developed a strategy of political advocacy aimed at generating opportunities for access to decent and safe housing for young people who leave the protection system, this being one of the most critical issues that they face in this process.



**Methodology:**  
 The systematization of the experience of incidence in housing alternatives proposes:

- Generate an identification of the problem through a national inter-sectoral diagnosis of the situation of access to decent and safe housing for young people who leave the protection system.
- Generate a comprehensive work plan to support the leaving of the protection system, as well as impact on public policy, through the articulation between social organizations and key state actors.
- Piloting housing solutions for young people in the process of leaving the protection system, which in this particular case contemplated the component of subsidized housing (self-managed and collective housing).
- Develop a pilot proposal for scalable public policy based on permanent monitoring and evaluation.



### Enhancing the process of progressive autonomy and the construction of independence of adolescents and youth participants of the SOS programme.

To achieve this premise, we suggest the following considerations:

- Sensitize and train co-workers and families of origin on the importance of promoting progressive autonomy and independence from approaches and methodologies such as parenting and positive discipline and pedagogical mediation
- Generate processes and strategic actions for the development of life skills, autonomy and independence, through progressive and systematic planning from the moment of the entry of the child or adolescent to the Programme, establishing flexible and realistic deadlines and objectives.
- Ensure methodologies and tools for the support and accompaniment of the life trajectories and projects of adolescents and young people, such as Individual Development Plans (IDP) and Life Projects (LP).
- To provide a close, emotional and empathetic support to adolescents and young people in the construction of their development plans and life project(s).
- Provide relevant information and processes that enhance the life skills of adolescents and young people, especially those who are in alternative modalities of residential care, such as information on general culture and legislation, guidelines for social coexistence, decision-making capacity, interpersonal relationships, critical thinking, problem and conflict management, emotion management, understanding of rights and responsibilities that involve reproduction, among others.
- Involve adolescents and young people, according to their maturity, in daily processes and tasks, such as diligences, housework, carrying out procedures related to the home and citizenship (identity card, driver's license), specifying appointments and exams doctors, among others, without affecting other development processes and responsibilities already acquired.
- Ensure checking, monitoring, evaluation and readjustment of development plans and life projects on a regular basis, considering the active participation of the adolescent and young person in their process.

- ⑦ Guarantee the existence of a role of accompaniment to young people in the Programmes, by professional and/or specialist personnel, who forms part of the technical team and who facilitates processes of change, pedagogical mediation and orientation of adolescents and young people in their process of autonomy and independence.
- ⑦ Ensure the establishment of extra-institutional support networks, including the family of origin, who can support young people who leave the protection system in terms of affect, economic, housing, among others.
- ⑦ Design and implement strategies around the education and financial planning of adolescents and young people, such as administration of resources, budget planning, categorization of expenses (including insurance payments, taxes, social benefits, etc.), access to bank accounts, loans, credits and microloans, recognition of financial risks, among others.
- ⑦ Prepare young people to search for decent and safe housing options, which implies developing skills for housing management, rent management, knowing the legislation that protects them, among others.
- ⑦ To provide adolescents and young people with relevant information on access to decent and safe housing (housing bonds, loans, financing options, among others), as well as fostering closer relations with institutions and organizations in charge of providing housing options.



### **Accompany the process of exploration of possible life trajectories for adolescents and young participants of the SOS programmes.**

To achieve this premise, we suggest the following considerations:

- ⑦ Design and implement strategies from a focus of life trajectories, in response to the demands of the current context that require flexibility, openness to change, management of risk and uncertainty from young people.
- ⑦ Accompany the life trajectories of young people, providing them with all the information they need to take advantage of opportunities, seek alternative solutions and make safe and responsible decisions.
- ⑦ Encourage the development of critical thinking and identity in young people, so that they define success from their own parameters, thus seeking personal fulfillment from its subjective construction.



### **Framing the post-leaving processes of the protection system for adolescents and young people from the perspective of life trajectories.**

To achieve this premise, we suggest the following considerations:

- ⑦ Ensure post-leaving accompaniment strategies of the protection system, aligned with the prior preparation process, which includes contact and link with significant figures of the Programme and psychoeducational and emotional support whenever necessary.
- ⑦ Promote mentoring for autonomy and independence processes of adolescents and youth in alternative care carried out by young people and adults former participants, which includes the training of potential mentors who have graduated from the protection system and pedagogically can support and guide those who start and they go through that process.



**Ensure the conditions that enhance the educational trajectory (formal and non-formal) of adolescents and young people participating in the SOS Programmes, as part of the process of autonomy and independence.**

To achieve this premise, we suggest the following considerations:

- ④ Develop processes of vocational guidance with adolescents and young people for the exploration of dreams and vital goals, understanding of the social function of the different professions and careers and the construction of plans, projects and life trajectories.
- ④ Perform a mapping of the risk factors of educational exclusion faced by adolescents and young participants, as an input to develop specific support actions that enhance the protection of this population against this phenomenon.
- ④ To foster the conditions and opportunities for adolescents and young participants of the Programmes to develop and complete their formal educational process, through educational reintegration, access to complementary services (tutoring and school reinforcement), access to credits and educational scholarships, among others.
- ④ Facilitate the access of adolescents and young people to opportunities for training and non-formal training, for example in partnership with other organizations/institutions and volunteer opportunities.



**Promote and develop the skills of young people for employability, including within this the entrepreneurship.**

To achieve this premise, we suggest the following considerations:

- ④ Raise awareness among young people about decent employment as a means to independence, economic autonomy and personal fulfillment.
- ④ Design and implement processes, strategies and support initiatives for the employability of young people, such as: preparation of curriculum vitae, job search, management of job interviews, exercise of labor rights (labor exploitation, informal sector), among others.
- ④ Develop processes, strategies and actions that empower young people the inter and intrapersonal skills necessary to perform in the workplace.
- ④ Ensure the development of knowledge, skills and complementary technical skills necessary to perform the work of interest of the young person, such as computer skills, language management, among others.
- ④ Working articulately with governmental networks and institutions, business/productive sector and other organizations, in order to generate training opportunities, development of technical skills and preparatory experiences for the employment of young people, such as workshops, internships, mentoring, and professional observation, among others.
- ④ Ensure the psychoeducational, emotional and economic support (transportation, subsidy) of young people who pass through employability processes or who are already inserted in their first job.
- ④ Recognize and enhance entrepreneurial skills in young people in the programmes as preparation for the development of enterprises, such as skills and abilities to entrepreneur, self-motivation to make a difference, differentiated competence even within employment, among others.
- ④ Facilitate the access of young people to information, training, technical guidance and financial support for the development of their business plans and productive ventures.



## PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES OF INTEREST: Model of Employability, SOS Children's Villages Costa Rica



### Description:

The model of employability of SOS Children's Villages Costa Rica started in 2013 and has been the inspirational model of the international platform of employability of the organization called YouthCan! The model of the Employability of SOS CR aims to facilitate the practical training and job placement to young people in condition of vulnerability, through the articulation of public-private entities and non-governmental organizations.



### Methodology:

The experience of SOS CR with its model of employability has involved:

- ④ Identify young people in vulnerable condition by defining the profile of the participant and a process of recruitment and selection by both SOS Children's Villages and the allied company (in a second moment).
- ④ Focus attention on training and comprehensive support for employability (development of life skills, technical training, psychosocial monitoring during training, practical training through internships, reference to support services), post-service - training (job search, post-employment psychosocial support) and the management of alliances (training, reference of participants and financial sustainability).
- ④ Prioritize capacity-building processes with companies and allied organizations to strengthen support for young people, as well as facilitate young people's access to public, private and community resources as needed.
- ④ Integrate a transversal axis of professional volunteering to maximize the attention provided to young people.

## 8. Annexes

### 8.1. Acronyms used in the document

ILO	International Labor Organization
IDP	Individual Development Plan
LP	Life Project (s)
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children

### 8.2. References

- <sup>1</sup> Moreno, A; López, A; and Segado, S. (2012). La transición de los jóvenes a la vida adulta. Crisis económica y emancipación tardía. Obra Social "la Caixa". Retrieved from: <http://www.ciudadesporeempleo.es/files/Latransiciondelosjovenesalavidaadulta.pdf>
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