

Construction of The Educational Path and Life Project for Portuguese Young People at Risk: Case Study in A Foster Home

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Abstract:

The qualitative methodology study (case study) aimed to understand the educational path and autonomy of 11 Portuguese young people at risk, in a shelter institution -ADME (Castelo Branco) (period: 2021-22). The objectives were as follows: to analyze young people's perception of institutionalization and autonomy; understand the integration of these young people in the school context; identifying learning difficulties in schooling; characterize the socio-educational trajectory of these young people regarding academic performance and relationships; understand the technical role of the institution in the training process of young people; analyze collaboration between 'ADME-schools'; learn about the construction of these young people's life projects. We used the following data collection techniques: documentary and participant observation; semi-structured interviews; field notes; 'Focus Group'. We carried out content analysis and data triangulation, with the results confirming the technical importance of the institution in the school career, development of autonomy skills and life projects for young people, in addition to the good interrelationship between 'ADME-schools'.

Keywords: Young people at risk. Institutionalization in a Foster Home. Educational route. Life project. Autonomy.

Introduction:

We know that the family is the first educational and socialization context in which the child is inserted and where they learn social, cultural values and basic emotions, promoting the construction of their individual and social identity. Whenever this socio-emotional, educational and cultural base is missing or deficient, the child may have difficulty building a consistent identity that contributes to an autonomous and responsible life (Gomes, 2019; Sousa, 2015). When they are at risk of adverse life trajectories, providing them with conditions, support and care appropriate to their full development, which they often do not enjoy in their family contexts and, therefore, it is recommended

that they be institutionalized in a shelter home, as a measure promotion and protection. Residential care is only applied as a last resort, since care has to do with the issue of autonomy, the development of a life project and the transition to society (Caio, 2014; Saltão, 2022). The insistence on young people's autonomy is due to the fact that it instills in them the ability to assume individual responsibility for their own actions and choices, that is, it is a responsibility at the emotional, physical, economic level and at the level of values and own decisions. Therefore, it is essential to know how those responsible and technicians in reception institutions work with this autonomy and

the skills acquired, including in the educational process of schooling (Mateus, 2020; Pinto, 2020).

Our conceptual theoretical model was guided by a heuristic and analysis on the topic, clarifying concepts, addressing legislation related to children/young people at risk or danger, institutionalization studies of young people at risk and, in spatial terms, those carried out previously in the area from Castelo Branco/Portugal (Aguiar, 2021; Caio, 2014; Faromba, 2013; Freitas, 2017; Gomes, 2019; Pinto, 2020). We used qualitative research methodology, based on the interpretative/naturalistic paradigm, in the case study modality (Yin, 1994) – ADM Estrela institution (institution located in Castelo Branco), addressing information/data, narratives and experiences of institutionalization and schooling of young people, in the context of personal, academic and social development and in the construction of their life project, as that qualitative methodology “[...] is rich in reports made by the subjects themselves”, that is, it is in “[...] understanding behaviors from the perspective of the research subjects" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994, p. 16). It is also a situational, exploratory, descriptive, analytical and interpretative case study with a sample of institutionalized at-risk youth (N =11), with the contribution of data/information from 3 technicians/professionals from the institution and 4 teachers from the schools where they attend school (interviews and participant observation with field notes), with the purpose of interpreting their socio-educational path, the values developed and acquired in school training and reception, socialization (interpersonal relationships) and construction of the life project (Aguiar, 2021; Pinto, 2020).

Our purpose, as a study problem, was to understand the school path, the daily life of the young people under study and the construction of their life project, guided by the following objectives: analyzing the school path and the life project of the young people in the ADME; know the relationships of these institutionalized young people with their peers and teachers at the school they attend;

understand the forms of collaboration/support between the institution's technicians and schools and teachers; identify the perceptions of these young people, understanding their paths; analyze the academic performance of these young people in terms of learning in schools and in foster homes; describe the interrelationship between the school and the ADME foster home. We use several data collection techniques: documentary observation, natural/informal (in loco - observation) and participant observation; the interview survey of 11 institutionalized boys; semi-structured interviews with 4 school class teachers and 3 foster home technicians; and records of field notes and the ‘focus group’ at the end. We analyze and process the data obtained, based on content analysis, and then subject it to triangulation, with interpretation based on the researched grounded theory. The results confirmed the contributions of the institution under study and the school attended by the young people and in the construction of the life and learning project.

1.-Intervention in the Protection of Children/Young People in Danger/Risk

The theoretical-conceptual framework underlying the specialized literature research implied a conceptual clarification combined with the analysis of legislation on the protection and reception of Portuguese children/young people at risk (Portugal, 1999, 2015, 2018, 2019) and, also a range of studies on institutionalization with young people at risk who attend school, undertake their socio-educational journey and prepare their life project and autonomy (Brandão, 2015; Ferreira, 2016; Fonseca, 2023; Leal et al., 2018; Moreira, 2018 ; Neto, 2021; Rodrigues, 2018 and 2022; In the bibliographical research, we took into account references to studies already carried out in the Castelo Branco region on children/young people at risk in foster care institutions identical to that of the study, especially Aguiar (2021), Gomes (2019) and Pinto (2020).

Protection mechanisms in legal regulations

Law:

Law no. 147/99, of September 1st, as amended by Law no. 26/2018, of July 5th) in its paragraph 2 of article 3 (Legitimacy of Intervention) (Portugal, 1999) considers a child/young person in danger:

“a) It is abandoned or lives on its own; b) Suffers physical or psychological abuse or is a victim of sexual abuse; c) Does not receive the care or affection appropriate to their age and personal situation; d) Is forced to carry out activities or work that are excessive or inappropriate for their age, dignity and personal situation or harmful to their training or development; e) Is subject, directly or indirectly, to behaviors that seriously affect their safety or emotional balance; f) Engages in behaviors or engages in activities or consumption that seriously affect their health, safety, training, education or development without their parents, legal representative or whoever has de facto custody opposing them in an appropriate manner to remove this situation ”

Promotion and protection measures for these children/young people in danger aim to keep them away from the danger in which they find themselves and also: provide the necessary conditions to protect and promote safety, health, training, education, well-being and integral development; and guarantee physical and psychological recovery from any form of exploitation or abuse (article 35 of Law nº 147/99). According to current legislation, these measures can be: support from parents or other family members; trust a suitable person; autonomy support; family care or institutional care; and adoption.

In fact, the concept ‘children/young people at risk’ continues to suffer from some ambiguity, despite the extensive bibliography that already exists. However, this collective of children/young people has been analyzed by numerous researchers from various scientific disciplines and from different perspectives (Guerra, 2018; Ramião, 2017). In fact, the term ‘risk’ is a recurring concept in several scientific areas, more or less explicitly in contemporary discourses (Carvalho & Cruz, 2015). The risk is not limited to a set of aspects of ways of

living or specific disciplines of knowledge, as any risk situation in children/young people arises from: Experiential deficit; Lack of a set of positive experiences; Difference between the type of experiences expected/desired in children, depending on their age; Presence of negative experiences. Thus, there are three significant aspects to the notion of risk, according to the criteria used to classify children/young people: Psychosocial perspective; Logical-functional and pragmatic perspective; Legal perspective (juvenile justice). While the term “danger” in literature means the imminent realization of a threat that places the individual at the limit of their entire human integrity and, therefore, we speak of a continuum, in which the concept of risk and danger are part of the same dimension, the developmental dimension, where risk, danger and vulnerability converge. In other words, the ‘risk’ situation is related to the individual’s development. In fact, the dangerous situations that lead to the institutionalization of children/young people fall into five groups: physical abuse, situations of neglect, situations of psychological abuse, sexual abuse and other situations. The promulgation of Law No. 147/99 constituted the tool for “[...] promoting the rights and protection of children and young people in danger, in order to guarantee their well-being and integral development” (art. 1st). The legitimacy of intervention began to be recognized by entities with competence in matters of children/youth, being “[...] natural or collective public, cooperative, social or private persons” (item “d” of article 5) (Portugal, 1999).

Legal regulations, for example the Guardianship Organization for Minors (Decree-Law No. 314/78 of October 27), Law No. 147/99 (Law for the Protection of Children and Young People in Danger), Law No. 166/ 99 of 14 September (Educational Guardianship Law), were enacted not only to define what constitutes a child and young person at risk and in danger, but also to establish responses to their protection, determining what is a foster home and what its performance (Guerra, 2018; Moreira, 2018). We also intend to understand the protective actions and warning signs for

preventing children and young people at risk. One of the social feedbacks in favor of the protection of children and young people - and one of the various roles given to reception institutions - is institutional guidance and intervention in the rehabilitation of subjects, that is, protecting them from risk factors and not allowing them to deviate from practicing good conduct. Since parents are legally prevented from caring for the minor, the role of taking care of health services, school and social activities is assumed by the host institution (Henriques, 2015; Pereira, 2016). Law No. 147/99 already establishes protection guidelines and how to deal with dangerous situations for these children/young people (Portugal, 2019). There is a concern on the part of the legislator for the rights of minors, with the main objective of strengthening the powers of social institutions with the aim of preventing dangerous situations (Ramião, 2017)

One of the points considered positive in Law N°. 147/99 was the inclusion of two new rights for children/young people in foster care. One of them states that the child or young person must be, whenever possible, welcomed in a shelter that is close to their family context of origin and the other concerns the non-separation of other siblings in foster care, unless the best interests of the child so require. contraindicate, as referred to in article 58, paragraphs i) and j) (Portugal, 1999). This legal regulation is based on the principle of subsidiarity, which defines that intervention in the promotion of the rights and protection of children/young people must be carried out successively, and, at a first level, promoted by the competent entities in the area of childhood and youth (health, education, professional training, leisure activities, among others).

The committees for the protection of children/young people in danger (CPCJP) work to provide support to parents and institutional care. Thus, institutional care becomes an option when the support measure with parents fails (Delgado & Gersão, 2018). This tradition of institutionalization tried to be reversed through Law No. 147/99 (PORTUGAL, 1999), but the difficulty in

channeling the financial resources available for the functioning of the institutions created entropies. When the 2015 Law came into being, however, existing practices were not altered, but there were changes. However, it is not enough to legislate, there must be a link between legislation and existing practices for change to really happen (Guerra, 2018). In other words, the legislative review implied a change in the assumptions of family care, prioritizing the measure of residential care, especially in the case of children under 6 years of age. In fact, for foster care to be successful, it is imperative to gradually modify the existing map of foster homes, both in terms of size and number, as the aim is to provide the best living conditions for children/young people and be as close as possible to family life (Neto, 2021).

Reception System for Children/Young People at Risk:

The first consists of assigning custody of the child/young person to an individual or a family qualified for this purpose. Institutional care consists of placing the child/young person in the care of an entity and has two forms: short-term, taking place in a Temporary Reception Center (CAT) for a period of no more than 6 months; and prolonged care, in a Children and Youth Home (CYH), lasting more than 6 months (Saltão, 2022). In fact, the institutionalization of children/young people in these equivalences can be considered an ambivalent process, as it is a measure that aims to remove the child/young person from the danger in which they find themselves, playing a fundamental role in satisfying their basic needs (Leal et al., 2018).

However, it can become a protective measure that exposes the child/young person to other risks with implications for their development, for example: difficulty in developing close relationships with others; trust issues (self and straight); and confusion regarding family identity (Fonseca, 2023). The ambivalence of institutionalization is experienced by children/young people with strong feelings (positive and negative) regarding parental ties and their situation of suffering (Ramião, 2017).

Thus, when a child/young person is removed from their family environment to an institution where they have to live with other children/young people and where they receive collective treatment, feelings of anxiety arise resulting from separation from their family and affective-emotional abandonment. (Rodrigues, 2022). Hence, one of the problems of reception is minimizing the negative consequences of separation and inadequate parenting of these minors. The challenge of institutionalization involves providing them with a life project that is a strong path of support and construction for their integration into society and training for citizenship.

Residential care for children/young people, according to article 49 - Law no. 142/2015 “[...] consists of placing the child or young person in the care of an entity that has facilities, reception equipment and permanent human resources, duly dimensioned and qualified, to guarantee them adequate care.” (Portugal, 2015). This regulation is implemented when parents or their legal representatives or guardians endanger the safety, health, training, development or education of children/young people, including if this danger is the result of the action or omission of third parties or the child/young person themselves (if those responsible do not do anything to remove them). In fact, the life trajectories of institutionalized children/young people are marked by losses, neglect, situations of abuse and abandonment (Gaspar; Alcoforado & Santos, 2015). For these reasons, the reception proposal arises with the objective of promoting better living conditions for them, as described in article 58 of Law n° 142/2015 (Portugal, 2015).

Evidently, the key aspects in promoting institutional care are (Alves, 2007; Carvalho & Cruz, 2015; Sousa, 2015): the principle of individuality of each child/young person, promoting the self-esteem of the person receiving care; the principle of respect for your rights and the rights of your family, in order to generate self-confidence; the principle of ‘schooling and educational alternatives’, giving children/young

people the opportunity to think and decide; the principle of ‘adequate satisfaction of the basic needs’ of each child/young person, making them believe in their abilities; the principle of ‘health care’, promoting an environment that is therapeutic; the principle of social integration, stimulating a sense of belonging; the principle of ‘preparation for autonomy’, instilling the necessary security so that they are capable of making their own decisions; the principle of ‘support for families’, respecting the uniqueness of each family; the principle of ‘safety and protection’, ensuring the stability and protection of children and young people; the principle of the ‘life project’, allowing children and young people to believe in the future; and the principle of respect for the ‘right to participation’, providing children with knowledge that allows them to make reflective decisions and actively participate in defining their life project. It is estimated that there are currently more than five thousand children/young people in care, whose essential principles of intervention and functioning are the following: protection, stability, (self)confidence, inclusion, security, solidarity, responsibility and autonomy (Casa 2022, 2023). However, this reception measure should not be applied with the aim of filling an inadequacy in the family, but in order to promote the opportunity to provide added value that is effective for both the child/young person and their family (Fonseca, 2023; Moreira, 2018).

Law No. 147/99, of September 1st, already distinguished “short-term reception” from “long-term” depending on the duration, differentiating institutions according to the type of reception and, hence, there are “temporary shelters” and “nursing homes” childhood and youth” (Delgado & Gersão, 2018). Now this differentiation disappears with Law n° 142/2015, naming reception institutions as shelters (art. 50, paragraph 1 of that diploma). This article also states that these can be organized into specialized units, namely: houses designed to respond to emergency situations; homes designed to respond to specific problems; and autonomous apartments. With this regularization, a new name “precautionary title” appears, previously

“provisional reception” and, therefore, whenever specialized units do not exist, children and young people, whatever the purpose of reception, are welcomed in generalist homes in situations emergency or during the period of diagnosis of the child or young person's situation, regardless of the expected length of reception (Ferreira, 2016). Therefore, reception institutions can be cooperative or public, private or social and operate on an open basis, that is, parents can visit the child or young person, in accordance with the rules and schedules of the institution, unless otherwise decided by the court (Guerra, 2018; Rodrigues, 2018).

Alves (2007, p. 75) states that the National Reception System “[...] is made up of the set of reception responses from the State and civil society (Private Social Solidarity Institutions and other entities) aimed at children and young people in a dangerous situation.” In fact, the institutional care measure is aimed at children/young people who, temporarily or permanently, cannot remain within their family of origin, as this does not guarantee them conditions, at least immediate, for their reception and education) (Silva; Oliveira & Marques, 2019). Therefore, residential care is considered to be the last protective promotion measure to be applied to children/young people, as this extra-family placement measure aims to guarantee their protection from adverse and risky situations that they experience in their family environment. This is a legal action aimed at dangerous situations and approaches in which other interventions have not been successful, such as support and advice for parents or other family members and adoption, in which foster care appears as the last measure. to implement. This measure consists of three types of response according to intervention needs: reception in an Emergency Unit; temporary reception in a Temporary Reception Center; and prolonged care in a Children's and Youth Home.

As for Children and Youth Homes, as is the case with ADME, they are a social response aimed at children/young people up to the age of 21, and it is possible to extend their reception up to the age of

25, when defending the best interests of the young person so demand it. This type of response is prolonged in nature and intended for dangerous situations that are considered complex and that put the integrity of the child/young person at risk, therefore requiring long-term care (Sousa, 2015). In other words, it must provide living conditions as close as possible to those of family life, with its objectives being “[...] to satisfy all the basic needs of the child/young person; promote their reintegration into the family and community; contribute to their personal, social and professional development” (Alves, 2007, page 75). In order to promote life structures similar to those that exist in the family structure in children/young people at risk, the Children and Youth Homes operate on an open basis and are organized in units with sufficient elements that allow the existence of a favorable affective relationship of a family type. and an individualized and personalized daily routine (Delgado & Gersão, 2018; Fonseca, 2023).

In fact, children/young people at risk remain in care for an extended period, presenting weak personal and social skills that hinder the development of their autonomy, adaptation to the educational and training process, socialization and social and professional inclusion (Silva; Oliveira & Marques, 2019 ; Sousa, 2015). Consequently, they may develop behavioral problems, difficulties with school integration and relational, learning and socio-emotional functioning. When institutionalized, they lead to paths and life trajectories marked by mistreatment, affective-emotional deficits, deprivation of well-being, suffering and relationships that are little or not at all rewarding. These aspects come from the social and family environment (disstructured and/or problematic families, with inappropriate parenting styles), as the family does not provide the child with the basic conditions (responsible citizenship, transmission of values, parental supervision) that allow for integral development. and adaptive to the different dimensions (cognitive, ethical-moral, affective-emotional, social and relational) (Saltão, 2022). Its affective-emotional component is marked by instability, as it affects their learning at

school, social and personal levels. Therefore, when these children/young people are unable to achieve their own goals they end up in self-exclusion, or else, they are not very persistent, unmotivated and have little faith in their abilities (Moreira, 2018; Rodrigues, 2018; Silva, 2022).

Therefore, it is necessary that the intervention in institutionalization is carried out according to the characteristics of the child/young person, identifying the aspects to be developed so that they can achieve their objectives. In this sense, it is important to allow the child/young person to assume a sense of responsibilities, according to their age level and capabilities, enhancing and optimizing their educational process and sustained autonomy, their ability to make individual decisions and consciously and problem-solving (Ferreira, 2016). Thus, the intervention and activities carried out at the institution constitute a key device for their future socio-professional integration, being a training advantage, as they are activities that are not easily carried out in their community of origin (Alves, 2007; Freitas, 2017). In other words, it is intended that they develop skills: at the level of relational and/or personal autonomy, that is, acquisition of skills relating to self-esteem, self-concept, emotion management, self-confidence, self-esteem, ability to solve problems and, also, acquisition of responsibility skills regarding decisions; at the level of functional autonomy, the acquisition of essential skills for autonomy in various areas of personal and social life (Leal et al., 2018).

2.- Empirical methodology: Design, Methods, Sample and Procedures:

We carried out a qualitative methodology research, based on the interpretative paradigm and in the case study modality, referring to a sample of N=11 young people at risk, institutionalized in the Foster Home- ADME in Castelo Branco, which is a Private Institution of Social Solidarity (IPSS), opened in December 1989, whose headquarters are located in Vale de Estrela – Guarda/Portugal. It is also an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) institution with long-term residential family care

for young men at risk (placed by the family and juvenile court), whose action is aimed at promoting and developing social, educational activities, social and community inclusion, training and professional development and, also, contribution to the life project of young people. Its human resources are made up of a technical director, a social worker, seven educators, three operational assistants and a teacher placed by the Ministry of Education, under the 'Casa Project', developing relevant work with young people, with the purpose of providing them with provide a socio-educational response, providing them with conditions for autonomy, in an individualized dimension for each young person. The institution, which has partnerships with many entities in the region, aims to stimulate and educate young people towards a restorative change, promoting their integration, social, personal and emotional development, with a view to realizing their life projects, investing in their full social and professional integration.

ADME is located in a more or less large house, with three floors with spaces designed to accommodate the activities carried out by young residents, offices for the director and technical team (social worker and educators), bedrooms, study rooms, living rooms - conviviality. They carry out diverse activities (leisure, sports, educational and/or recreational) inside or outside the establishment, with support and monitoring knowing that institutionalized young people have a previously established routine, having flexibility for personal or collective reasons.

The institution's main objectives, in accordance with the Children and Youth Home Regulations: Ensure the protection of children and young people in danger; Promote the well-being, integral development, active citizenship and social (re)insertion of children/young people, through strategies, procedures and therapeutic and/or educational programs; Assess the needs and develop the potential of each child and young person, based on their life story and family situation; Provide a normative living environment that provides them with diverse, rich life

experiences suited to their needs and potential; Provide an environment close to a harmonious and affectionate family environment, promoting emotional bonds and coexistence relationships; Ensure compliance with and respect for the rights of children and young people in care; Promote the active participation of children/young people in care in the general context in which they are inserted and in decisions that concern them, particularly in defining their life projects; Know the conditions of the nuclear and extended family and develop their abilities and skills in order to, if possible, a future (re)integration, always focused on the best interests of the child/young person; Prepare children/young people for their autonomy and social integration.

Between the years 2021 and 2022, ADME had institutionalized 11 young people (sample N=11) from situations of social vulnerability, parental neglect, exposure to deviant parental models, victims of abuse and orphanhood in the Castelo Branco and Porto regions, with 7 of them attending compulsory schooling (from the 6th year to the 12th year), 3 taking a professional course, with the aim of entering the job market (transition) and, still one, attending a higher education course in Literature. They are all male, aged between 12 and 23 years old, having entered the institution between 2016 and 2019, which confirms that they are adapted to the institution, as they take more than a year (a young person) up to 10 years stay in residential care (average institutionalization time of 5 years).

We used the following data collection techniques/methods: documentary observation about ADME, social and educational project, regulation and youth processes (coded J); informal/natural observation and participant observation in the host institution; semi-structured interview with institutionalized young people (N_j=11), the institution's technical team (N_i= 3 - DT=technical director, AS=social worker and Pi=Teacher placed by the School) and 4 class teachers (N_p=4) of the schools where young people attend; 'Focus Group' with young people at the

institution about their autonomy, training path and life project; field note records. In terms of ethical-legal procedures and authorization to carry out the study, compliance with the rules of ethics in research, having requested in an official letter to the person responsible for ADME to access the data of the young people studying and, also, in the School Groups where the young people attend, so that we can interview the teachers responsible for class directors. This entire legal procedure was carried out under the existing protocols between the Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco and the School Groups in the region, in this particular case having submitted a form of free acceptance to the interviewees. Knowledge of consulting diagnoses, social reports and school documents and reports was also provided.

3.- Analysis, Discussion and Triangulation of results:

The analysis and interpretation of data from the instruments applied and which were previously subjected to validity and reliability allowed us, through data triangulation, to have multiple points of view of the study subjects' responses. This triangulation technique constitutes a process of better rooting the knowledge obtained with this qualitative methodology, allowing us to expand and complete the production of knowledge with the sustainability of the grounded theory on the topic addressed. We will analyze the content of the data in the semi-structured interviews carried out with the subjects under study (institutionalized young people; technicians from the ADME professional team and teachers from the schools where the young people attend).

We will then carry out the analysis and interpretation, based on grounded theory, of information from the respective subjects: 11 young people at risk; 4 teachers from the schools where they attend their studies; 4 ADME support technicians for young people.

Analysis of interviews with institutionalized young people:

In relation to the interview survey with young people institutionalized in ADME (N_j=11),

triangulated with participant observation (records of field notes and documentary analysis), we obtained the following results regarding institutionalized young people, typifying the respective categories of content analysis (Cat.1=Impact of institutionalization on the young person; Cat.2=Reception measure applied to the young person; Cat.3=Perception of the school and pedagogical relationship; academic performance and performance; Cat.6=Support/monitoring provided by ADME; Cat.7=Relationship between ADME and Schools; and training), with the respective supporting subcategories and text segment evidence issued by the subjects under study.

Cat. 1.-One of our aims was to analyze the impact of the reception institution on young people and its impact on their school career and life project. Most young people have a good impression of ADME, highlighting the support and advice given by the team of technicians and educators, in addition to the environment at the institution with colleagues (friendship relationships) (Aguiar, 2021; Pinto, 2020).

Cat. 2.-Regarding the young people's opinion on the reception measure applied to them, the majority of them consider it 'fair', considering it a 'personal, academic and social added value' for them, highlighting the factor of protection and prevention on the part of the institution, where they generate 'very positive bonds of friendship, interpersonal relationships and coexistence', in addition to the proximity and interrelationship in 'contacts between ADME and the school' (Pinto, 2020). Only one young person (J1) considered the reception measure unfair, which caused him to suddenly distance himself from his parents/family. Now this issue pointed out by J1 implies a reflection on the ways and procedures of contact with the 'family' during reception, as their removal or separation is a negative factor that weighs on the construction of their life project (Brandão, 2015).

Cat. 3.-We highlight the good impression that most young people have with the school, with 2 of them standing out with a 'very positive' conception,

which is associated with the pretension of wanting a better future, even if 2 of them affirm a less positive conception good at school, as they do not like studying and consider "[...] the school environment to be hell" (J4) or "[...] it is indifferent to me, as I do not relate it to my future professional" (J8). For Tofos, school is very important for their future lives and teaches them valid content. On the other hand, most of them consider their colleagues to be 'very cool', making some friends and having a good relationship with their peers, despite 2 of them (J1; J10) not communicating much. While most teachers maintain a 'good pedagogical relationship', with 2 of them (J3; J9) having a 'regular relationship' and 1 of them 'Bad' (J5), due to their difficulties with socio-emotional and communicative skills (Aguiar, 2021; Rodrigues, 2018). Two of them repeated the year, but managed to achieve a certain normality at school with pedagogical support at school (Caio, 2014).

Cat. 4.-Young people consider that residential care has an influence on their performance and academic performance, as they have a very positive image of ADME, as they practice many activities, play sports, go on trips, have autonomy in decisions and interact with each other. The others and technicians, in such a way that they grew a lot with these evaluative aspects, with repercussions on academic results and their behavior. They all recognize some differences in their performance and in the improvement of their income due to some assiduity and continuity in monitoring by ADME professionals, as they have specific schedules, the imposition of 'rules/norms' that cause them discomfort and habituation (Aguiar, 2021). They want greater encouragement and motivation from those responsible for the institution in developing their life project and transition to adulthood.

Cat. 5.-In relation to the educational path/trajectory and academic results before and during reception, between the years 2020-2022, they mainly consider the commitment and dedication of ADME managers and professionals and school teachers so that they have a good

training, good interpersonal relationships and better academic results, which confirms literature studies (Carvalho & Salgueiro, 2019) in relation to 'Regulatory Response Models' (incentives to comply with routines, tasks and obligations), 'Regulatory Response Model' Didactics (dialogue with young people to understand their concerns, problems and needs in relationships and behaviors), 'Empathic Response Model' (development of self-esteem, empathy and overcoming conflicts) and 'Relational Response Model' (affective-emotional relationship and development of socio-emotional skills, in order to promote self-confidence and autonomy). Most of them do not like studying or many 'subjects', which involves some difficulties, especially in mathematics and English, but they are aware that their school career, in terms of 'regular or positive' performance, with two of them saying so 'average' because they are demanding of themselves (J3; J10) and J8, being 'lazy', doesn't have much desire to be in classes (Aguiar, 2021; Pinto, 2020). There were 5 young people (J1; J2; J3; J5; J11) who had learning difficulties, but tried hard to succeed at school and not fail. Even so, there were 5 young people (J2; J3; J5; J8 and J11) who had some failures (repetitions), but which were later overcome. The majority do not really like doing their homework, presenting difficulties, requiring support from the institution's technical team.

Cat. 6.-In relation to the type of socio-pedagogical support provided by the institution and in support of studies, the majority highlights the support/'counseling' given by technicians from the host institution and teachers at the school, through tutorials. However, technicians from the ADME institution recognize the need for more intense and daily supervision, so that young people develop study habits and skills, develop interactive dialogue in their 'representations' about school (inadequacy to school rules and routines) and the training process (Aguiar, 2021; Fonseca, 2023).

Cat. 7.-Regarding the type of relationship maintained between the host institution and the school and teachers, young people identify that

ADME technicians/professionals contact the school to exchange various information (about punctuality and absences, performance and income school, learning difficulties, pedagogical support, behavior, lack of discipline or disrespect), being duly heard in everything by teachers and course coordinators. We can say that there is a good logic of interaction and proximity between ADME and the school (Aguiar, 2021; Pinto, 2020).

Cat. 8.-In relation to the intervention challenges presented to the ADME technical team in the social and academic support of young people, they indicate the 'lack of routines' and 'habits of complying with standards', the very strong presence of 'negative experiences that experienced before institutionalization', the 'adaptation to the institution's family-type environment', the presence of 'periods of school lack of motivation with certain subjects and with learning', the 'lack of concentration, dedication and effort to carry out school work'. However, the institution's professionals and volunteers recognize that they constitute a 'very interactive group, with capacity for change', the 'organizational capacity of ADME in responding to the desires and needs of young people', the persistence in studying and valuing school more for your future (Caio, 2014; Freitas, 2017).

Cat.9.-Young people are aware that they must improve their academic performance/performance, their own relational behavior, adjusting to the norms of the institution and school, in order to be able to build their life project: "[...] success at school is an important factor for our development, well-being and integration" (J11). In this sense, the majority do not know exactly what they want for their future, which is understandable because they are still in the process of compulsory schooling, expressing some expectations for personal, social and professional life in their autonomy. But four of them are more convinced of their decisions at a professional level (they attend professional courses and higher education). Between them, J2 and J6 are very clear about what they want (higher education), J7 wants to go to the republican guard and J5 to the

army. However, they all know that training is crucial for the future, and they are therefore aware of the need for will and dedication in their training (Carvalho & Cruz, 2015).

Analysis of interviews with school teachers

We carried out semi-structured interviews with 4 class director teachers (Np=4) from the schools attended by institutionalized young people at risk (Castelo Branco School Groups). The teachers available for the study were aged between 35 and 45 years old (=2 teachers, Female=1; Male=1) and 46 to 55 years old (=2 teachers, Female=1; Male=1), with professional experience, between 15 and 25 years of teaching service, with a bachelor's degree or equivalent and a master's degree in teaching. We typified teachers (Pt1, Pt2, Pt3, Pt4) and established content analysis categories (subcategories and text evidence): Cat.1=Characteristics of institutionalized young people; Cat.2=School adaptation -Integration of young people in the class; Cat.3= School route; Cat.4=Relationships between young people and the class (pedagogical relationship); Cat.5=Support/monitoring given to learning difficulties; Cat.6=Relationship between schools and ADME.

Cat. 1.-All teachers consider it important to know the characteristics and life stories of institutionalized young people (processes provided by ADME), so that they can learn about their educational needs, problems and difficulties in the teaching-learning process and the way how they should carry out the school intervention: “[...] I have direct access to the information given by the technical director of ADME...they are young people who talk little about it” (Pt1); “[...] Their story demonstrates who they are and what they need to be able to develop pedagogical strategies for them” (Pt2); “[...] We must be condescending towards them due to their life history in the past to individualize our pedagogical intervention” (Pt3); “[...] Their life story constitutes a risk factor in their school career, so it is important to provide support and understand them in their actions” (Pt4). In other words, teachers know and respect the young

people's past, re-emphasizing their life stories and try to intervene in an individualized, participatory and interactive way, providing them with the necessary support for their integration into the school/classes.

Cat. 2.- Teachers identify the process of adaptation/integration of institutionalized young people in school and classes, having a 'democratic' attitude (Pt1; Pt3), of “[...] interactive participation” (Pt3) or “[...] enable a good adaptation” (Pt4), but everyone recognizes that this adaptive and inclusion process takes time, and it is therefore normal to need support and counseling to integrate into the classes. The classmates of these institutionalized young people know their life stories and express their support/friendship and affection, without stigmatization or exclusion from the class, on the contrary, they try to include them in the school process and in educational coexistence.

Cat. 3.- Teachers consider that the school contributes to the training and socio-educational path of young people and, consequently, in the development of their personal and socio-professional life projects: “[...] Socialization is not easy’ (Pt2; Pt4); “[...] They need our support and dedication to integrate” (Pt3), “[...] our participation” (Pt1). All teachers express that academic performance is different among these young people, some “try hard, commit themselves, but need personal and academic guidance” (Pt1; Pt3), others “[...] show many difficulties in some subjects, especially mathematics” (Pt1) and some of them “[...] without interest in learning, in a reaction against studying and carrying out tasks” (Pt4). However, in general, teachers consider that “[...] uncontrolled impulses”, “aggressiveness” and “[...] lack of motivation for studying” are aspects that young people manifest in their daily school behavior, which is why some have low academic success and sometimes even repeat (repetitions between 1 and 2 times), requiring individualized or specific pedagogical support. It was evident in the teachers' statements that institutionalization has consequences for their performance and academic

performance and, therefore, they need psychopedagogical guidance from the school and the institution (Caio, 2014; Pinto, 2020).

Cat. 4.-Teachers of classes of institutionalized young people at risk consider that the “[...] condition of institutionalization has some consequences on relationships with the class, as they express a certain discontent and aggressiveness” (Pt2), but in general, they do not consider it decisive, with divergences on this issue, with different perceptions in the classroom context itself. However, at the beginning the “[...] relationships are difficult” (Pt1; Pt4), since this “[...] relationship directly interferes with the life project and socio-educational path of young people” (Pt3). Based on the intervention carried out by the teachers, in 'teamwork' (Pt1; Pt2) they manage to improve coexistence and social and educational relationships between them (educational climate in the class) saying: “[...] Based on relationships with the others determine the future inside and outside the school space” (Pt3), since the intervention carried out “[...] directly interferes with the life project and socio-educational path of these institutionalized young people” (Pt4).

Cat. 5.-The teachers are all of the opinion that the traumas that affect these institutionalized young people harm their training and academic performance, with consequences for academic success, as “[...] They need help to continue their studies” (Pt2) , since support must be given “[...] both by the school and by the host home” (Pt1; Pt2; Pt3), but “[...] if there is no support, it is more difficult at the school level to reverse the difficulties of these young people” (Pt4). Teachers are unanimous in recognizing the lack of families in these young people, as it brings negative marks on their school and learning trajectory (academic performance) (Aguiar, 2021; Farromba, 2013; Freitas, 2017).

Cat. 6.-Unanimously, class teachers recognize that the communication and interaction relationship between schools, class directors and ADME is 'Very good' (Pt1; Pt3; Pt4) or 'Excellent' (Pt2), with

always “[...] something in this collaboration to improve” (Pt4). The need for common projects between schools and institutions that care for children/young people at risk, oriented towards 'coexistence', 'socio-emotional skills' and 'interculturality' were mentioned by teachers, considering it an added value to improve school inclusion (Brandão, 2015; Pinto, 2020; Silva, 2022).

Analysis of interviews with ADME technicians/professionals:

We applied semi-structured interviews to the ADME technical team (Ni=4), consisting of; technical director (Dt) with a master's degree in the field of sport; the social worker (AS), graduated in Social Work and with two years at the institution; and a teacher placed at the institution (Pi), with experience in primary and secondary education and has spent 4 years at the institution. These individuals range in age from 35 to 48 and reside in Castelo Branco and are always available to young people with their needs and problems. From content analysis to semi-structured interviews, we established the following categories (with subcategories and respective text evidence): Cat.1=Characteristics of institutionalized young people and families; Cat.2=Integration of young people in ADME and respective difficulties; Cat.3=Social relationships of young people in ADME; Cat.4=ADME responses and social/school intervention; Cat.5= Trajectory and life project of young people.

Cat. 1.- The members of the technical team consider it extremely important for the intervention and responses given by ADME to know the life history and respective characteristics of institutionalized young people, as well as their families, as “[...] it facilitates us in our contribution to their lives, in acting and knowing how to deal with them” (As). Many of the life stories have to do with family neglect, vulnerability, abandonment, family disjunction, mistreatment and parental impediment (imprisonment of one of the parents). The person in charge recognizes that “[...] When the boys enter, they usually do not understand how

they will proceed in their lives and, therefore, the teachings given are useful for their life project over time” (Dt). The entire technical team is unanimous that the past and life history influence their socio-educational path and life project and, consequently, young people need to overcome these traumas and difficulties with the support of the institution and school, as “[. . .] the lack of family is fundamental for them’ (As; Pi), despite this “[...] they don't always take the young person's institutionalization situation well” (Dt), or else “[...] No they see it favorably, but they end up accepting it” (AS). Furthermore, they consider that the 'family-youth' relationship depends on the “[...] individuality of each young person” (Pi), often “[...] Many parents are absent, generating insecurities in young people and negative behaviors” (AS), sometimes being able to “[...] affect the well-being of the young person, or not... it is difficult to predict” (Dt), as well as in “[...] construction of their life project” (Pi). In other words, in general, in the opinion of the technical team, contacts with families do not contribute to an adequate socio-educational path for young people, as “[...] They are people incapable of leading a normalized life” (Dt).

Cat. 2.- The members of the technical team consider that young people usually react well, however “[...] There always comes a time when they feel trapped in their movements and freedom” (Dt), and sometimes they express “[...] Aggressiveness and impulsiveness in their reactions...but then they learn to deal with impulses and emotions” (AS), but the intervention made makes them “[...] Learn the need for social and emotional skills at the level relational” (Pi). The institutionalization of these young people and their inappropriate/inappropriate behaviors sometimes constitute a disturbing factor for their educational path and life project (Dt; Pi). Young people are encouraged to know how to deal with feelings of rejection, revolt, “[...] their frustrations and impulses, as it is a learning experience for them and for us, being a practice to be explored together in the intervention” (Dt), through “[...] close monitoring of each one of them” (AS), to help them

overcome difficulties, which confirms research already carried out (Neto, 2021; Pereira, 2016).

Cat. 3.- ADME is considered by the technical team as a family, young people feel in a welcoming and familiar environment “[...] They create great bonds with us and between them’ (Pi), generating 'An excellent relationship between us and them” (AS) having as a reference the “[...] Technicians and professionals at the institution set a good example and support” (Dt). The institution's technicians create emotional and friendly bonds with young people, also having a good relational and communicational coexistence between them, despite the fact that “[...] each one has their own personality” (AS). The close connections and coexistence in the institution produce a satisfactory and pleasant environment of trust among young people: “[...] There has to be a good relationship between everyone” (Dt), “[...] These young people all days are different days, and that's why I see this work as a mission and an exciting challenge” (AS), since these “[...] Relationships permeate very good socio-educational actions for young people” (Pi) at the affective level- emotional, communicational and relational. While the difficulties or weaknesses encountered with young people are at the level of routines and rules, to overcome the 'marks' brought from the past and the problems experienced at family level and this “[...] Conditions our work from the outset” (AS). Despite this identification and difficulties, the positive discourse of the professionals and the proximity between them know how to extract “[...] their strengths in a very interactive group with the capacity or desire for change” (Pi) and, in this way, we found “[...] The challenges of overcoming every day of doing more and better, of innovating and finding appropriate strategies” (Dt), confirming what Mateus (2020) says.

Cat. 4.- The role of the technical team and ADME is “[...] Making them safe, confident and happy” (As), “[...] Educating them to create life goals” (Dt), in order to “[...] Enable their inclusion in school and society, favoring the construction of their life project” (Pi) and then “[...] There is good

communication and socio-pedagogical and psychological support” (Dt) to all institutionalized young people. When they arrive at the institution, young people not be motivated to learn “[...] We try to make them motivated themselves and enjoy acquiring knowledge” (As), in other words, “[...] Initially, strong supervision and gradually, so that they acquire some autonomy” (Dt). It is true in the opinion of the technical team that “[...] These young people do not have study habits, so we have to intervene little by little” (Pi) and if necessary “[...] in more individualized monitoring as they do not we have specific times for them to study and sometimes we have the help of the Teacher assigned by the School Group” (AS). The responses of institutionalized young people do not entirely coincide with those of the technical team, as they state that they study only when they have attendance/tests, while others have the power to take the initiative to study “[...] two or three hours while others do not more than thirty minutes a day” (AS), confirming what Mateus (2020), Moreira (2018) and Leal et al. (2018) says. On the other hand, the institution maintains good interaction and collaboration with schools in a “[...] operation on a weekly basis, to exchange information about students” (Dt), therefore having a “[...] good coordination between ADME and schools, contributing to the young people's school career” (Pi), in such a way that there was “[...] In terms of school results, the majority improved a lot” (Dt). On the other hand, the activities developed by ADME contribute to the adaptation of young people in social, school and community terms (Aguiar, 2021; Pinto, 2020).

Cat. 5.- The members of the technical team consider that the life project of these young people at risk are the perspectives they have in relation to their future (perceptions, expectations), relating in this journey the determining social, educational and professional aspects, but requiring “[...] adequate development, with self-confidence and a sense of responsibility” (Dt; Pi). This intervention work is carried out and worked on by the entire technical team, educators and staff of the institution. They consider that “[...] knowing how to listen” (As),

“[...] making them analyze their decisions and have self-esteem” (Pi), since the “[...] function of the institution and help them in building their life project” (Dt). In fact, all the intervention and guidance given by the institution's staff is channeled “[...] into the path that young people have to follow in their lives” (Pi), corresponding to the “[...] incalculable socio-educational value of tracing objectives for the development of the life project” (Pi) with “[...] support in the social and relational sphere with others” (AS), confirming what Aguiar (2021) e Pinto (2020) says. Finally, the institution maintains a “[...] more than 50% connection with young people who left and we continue to have contact with these young people” (Dt).

Conclusions and Implications:

We know that Foster Care Homes aim to provide children/young people at risk with the satisfaction of their needs, promote their reintegration into the family and community whenever possible and also provide support and means that allow for their personal and social development. and cultural. The triangulation of data from content analysis with documents and individual processes of young people from different family situations, including abuse, related to the information collected through interviews with young people, class teachers and the team of professionals at the ADME institution and, also the 'focus group' with the boys about their journey and developing their life project. We can conclude that they adapted well to the host institution and school, with some repulsions and setbacks and in terms of health they have no physical problems, but some young people present some psychological behavioral and emotional problems (indifference towards studying, hyperactivity, aggressiveness and opposition), due to the refusal to be institutionalized and the school demands on their educational path (performance) (Aguiar, 2021). This repulsion implies, on the one hand, the effort and dedication of young people to achieve adequate academic performance and, also, good collaboration between the ADME institution

and the schools attended by young people at risk (Pinto, 2020).

In fact, we can say that these institutionalized young people share many of the characteristics of children/young people institutionalized in Foster Care Homes, knowing that the conditions of their reception are within the legal-legislative norms guiding the organization and activities of ADME itself. We highlight the good proximity between young people in the institution and with colleagues and teachers at school (relationships and coexistence) and between them and the institution's professionals, clearly evident in the different areas of their lives (Aguilar, 2021). Institutional experiences positively influence the development of their life projects (Gomes, 2019). For these young people, the host institution provides them with support and promotes appropriate skills for insertion into society, the job market and their life project. They have some school difficulties and also some family influences, but they demonstrate a great desire to achieve a good social and/or professional position, doing what they like, thus promoting their autonomy. The actions of ADME technicians and teachers facilitate the acquisition of a more proactive behavior, greater commitment and personal and school motivation, in addition to greater guidance support (personal, school), including counseling, approval and motivation in building your path education and life, compensating for the lack of family elements to carry out their projects. The institutional experience is referred to as crucial for their training and autonomy, preparation for life outside the institution and support for studies, in order to obtain better performance and income (Neto, 2021; Silva; Oliveira & Marques, 2019).

Some less positive aspects were indicated by these children and young people at risk, such as the adverse impact of the lack of contact with their guardians, family and friends, considered by them as a fundamental support base in the construction and implementation of their own life projects (Pinto, 2020). They also highlight a certain fear in thinking about their own future, as it worries them

(in such a way that their speeches and narratives express this concern). When building their life projects, they assume the idea of temporality. In fact, the ADME house typology and the small number of young people and ADME professionals provide stronger and more personalized social relationships and affective bonds between the different actors. These young people's behaviors express some negative mental representations (not wanting to study and not liking some areas of training), in some cases low self-esteem, evidenced by the significant presence of behavioral disorders, oppositional disorders and a lack of developing emotional skills (Carvalho & Salgueiro, 2019; Leal et al., 2018). This conclusion is not unrelated to the fragile foundations on which they grew up and the previous family and social environment. However, despite some difficulty in adapting to another relational system in the host institution and at school, it is important to reflect on strategies to adopt to minimize the negative effects of their experiences and enhance each person's individual capabilities, in a cordial and friendly environment. Positive (Moreira, 2018). The role of the institution's technicians and teachers in monitoring the educational process of young people and building their life projects is fundamental. We can only offer a quality response with an investment in the individuality of the intervention, in innovation and in the qualification of technicians who in this study demonstrate great commitment and dedication with positive results (Mateus, 2020).

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Conflict of Interest:

If you have no Conflict of interest, state "None".

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