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Youth and Children's Orchestras as Guiding Institutions. Towards guidance through art

Socio-educational proposals for young people play an important role in the creation of tools for the improvement of opportunities and for the achievement of satisfactory social insertions. Particularly the Youth and Children's Orchestras allow their participants to explore their skills, rehearse roles, build models and supports, among multiple knowledge that can be developed from their activities. In Argentina, the Orchestras projects are spread throughout the country and most of them are funded by public policies. This article presents the research "Youth in Orchestras: Construction of Identity and Future Projects"¹. It was held within the framework of *Grupo de Investigaciones e Intervenciones en Psicología de la Orientación (GIPO)*² of the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Buenos Aires³. The focus of the research is based on raising questions such as: Which are the meanings young participants give to the Orchestra? What kind of knowledge do they build? What future prospects do they construct? Also, the research aimed to understand some processes related to identity construction within the Orchestra project. The results are based on the narratives of 19 participants and those of their teachers and families. The final reflections will allow us to understand Children and Youth Orchestras as Guiding Institutions, with a general proposal that achieves the elaboration of key knowledge for the construction of sustainable lives in 21st century societies.

Keywords: youth and children orchestras, future, knowledge, identity construction, counseling

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² The Group has been conducting research with different socially vulnerable populations for more than 20 years. It is part of the UNESCO Group "Lifelong Guidance and Counseling" and the UNITWIN network: Life designing interventions -counseling, guidance, education- for decent work and sustainable development.

³ GIPO, as per its Spanish acronym, means Research and Interventions Team in Guidance and Counselling Psychology

The Initial Ideas that Gave Framework to the Research

The starting point of this research is the consideration of *the construction of life projects and the reflection on identity* as two central tasks in today's Western societies. People are expected to elaborate projects autonomously and responsibly, and to get involved in self-construction. These two processes directly challenge our discipline, Guidance and Counselling Psychology (Aisenson et al., 2018).

These tasks take place in a world of growing uncertainties where traditional references have been lost. Instead of constructing linear or predictable trajectories, people are challenged to build a reflective and integrative project throughout their lives. Individuals nowadays are forced to reflect on what matters most to them, the balance of work–family activities and interactions, and to give meaning to the big amount of heterogeneous and fragmented life experiences (Duarte, 2017; Giddens, 1995; Guichard, 2018).

For young people, the current *social imperatives* demand to delineate satisfactory educational trajectories and, at the end of high school, make autonomous decisions for the future regarding their personal, educational, and work contexts. But not all young people find themselves with the same opportunities to face transitions and elaborate future prospects (Aisenson et al., 2014, 2015, 2019). Faced with increasing social inequalities, some populations are restricted from achieving these tasks. The statistical data indicates the urgent need to focus research and interventions towards social groups that are in a situation of *social vulnerability* (Luna, 2009; Moreno Crossley, 2008).

In Argentina, official rates show that 49.2% of young people between 15 and 29 years old are poor (*Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos* [INDEC], 2021). The youth unemployment rate is around 20%. Concerning education, although it is compulsory to complete the secondary level, 35% of young people between 18 and 24 years old have not obtained a diploma. In this regard, there are differences between children and young people from families of different socio-economic levels. In 2016, the schooling rate of young people between 12 and 17 years old was 91.7% (*Sistema de Información de Tendencias Educativas en América Latina* [SITEAL], 2017). However, it differed by almost 13 points by socio-economic level (84.5% low versus 97.4% high). Quality is also an indicator: there is an important gap between young people from different social sectors regarding the knowledge they build in the educational institutions they attend.

A first question arises here. How do socially vulnerable young people construct life narratives? Also, which are the contexts and the experiences that allow building personal resources to face adversities and that enable future projection?

Since the '90s, innovative educational programs have been implemented by means of public policies in our country, to “compensate” the differences and improve the opportunities of the most disadvantaged populations. These programs are linked to the arts, sports, and recreation, with the objective of accompanying

the entering, permanence and finishing school pathways of young people. Also, the aim is to generate alternatives for social inclusion and to minimize the impact of deprived living conditions. *Youth and Children Orchestras* is one of these programs.

Given that the life narrative is constructed by integrating life experiences by interacting with others in different contexts (Savickas et al., 2009), the following questions arise as a framework of this research: How does the orchestra experience relate to other life pathway experiences? What meanings does the music and activities proposed have for its participants? What life stories does the passage through the activities of the Orchestra allow to build? Does the proposal enable the elaboration of future expectations?

Based on these questions, a *general objective* was settled: to understand relationships between the experience of participation in the Youth and Children Orchestra and the construction of identity and future projects in young socially vulnerable people. The specific objectives focused on: 1) knowing the *meanings* that young people give to the orchestra experience; 2) identifying and comparing the *educational experience* in the orchestra and at school; 3) analyzing the *future anticipations* and the relationship with the orchestra experience; and 4) exploring different dimensions of the *identity construction* as a biographical story.

The Youth and Children Orchestras in Argentina

The Youth and Children Orchestras in Argentina are socio-educational projects that arise within the framework of public policies in the '90s. It has as background the "System" of Venezuela of Children's and Youth Orchestras, founded by Antonio Abreu (*Sistema Nacional de Orquestas y Coros Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela* [SNOCJIV], 2018). Their main objective is "to improve access to cultural goods and services, build bridges towards the reintegration of young people in school, collaborate with school retention and stimulate contact and enjoyment of music by implementing a collective model of music education" (*Ministerio de Educación de la Nación Argentina* [MENA], 2014). The Orchestras set the activities in schools and local institutions that present high rates of fallbacks and dropouts, with the objective of improving the discontinued and interrupted school pathways of children and teenagers from these communities, offering a sense of belonging that allows for the appropriation of cultural and educational contents (Antello & Zanelli, 2004; Atela, 2005; Wald, 2009).

Orchestra Projects are developed from the public, private sector, and also from Non-Governmental Organizations. While projects may have differences, they generally share the same overall goals. The objectives are organized in 3 main pillars: 1) Educational: in addition to learning music, it explicitly aims to accompany the educational pathway of formal schooling; 2) Social: related to the promotion of citizen values, socialization with others, and the expansion of social circles; 3) Cultural:

linked to guarantee access to cultural goods, develop one's own cultural identity, and open its participants to diverse cultural worlds.

The app "Cultural Information System of Argentina" offers a cultural map of Orchestras that yield a total of 307 throughout the country, most of them in the province of Buenos Aires and surroundings.

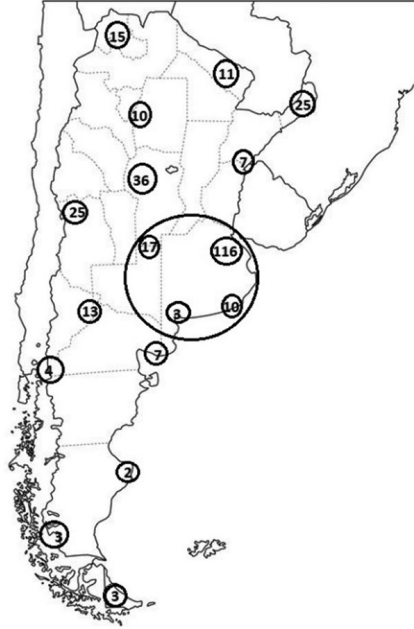


Fig. 1. "Cultural Map" of Youth and Children Orchestras in Argentina

Source: Sistema de información cultural de la Argentina [Cultural Information System of Argentina] <https://www.sinca.gob.ar/mapa.aspx?id=1> Search: Music/Orchestras and Choruses.

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The Research

Qualitative research was conducted by adopting an interpretative approach to the subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). An ethnographic approach was used, since it favours the comprehension of the meanings social actors assign to life experiences and helps build knowledge on this particular research discipline (Duarte & Cardoso, 2014). In regard to the data collection techniques utilized, participant observation and narrative interviews were conducted, tied to the settings in which the social action occurred, thus giving centrality to social actors. Analysis took place while the data gathering unfolded, and observations were of long duration. Different types of data were gathered to enhance the processes chosen for analysis

(Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019), using reflexivity as a tool that allow comprehend the impact that the researcher has on the investigation to “better understand the role of the self in the creation of knowledge” and “carefully self-monitor the impact of their biases, beliefs, and personal experiences” (Berger, 2015, p. 220).

The study took place during 2016 and 2017 in two orchestras from the greater Buenos Aires area (Buenos Aires, Argentina): *La Orquesta Infanto-Juvenil de Hudson* and *La Sonora de la IAPI*⁴ (Valenzuela, 2021). The orchestras were selected through key informants with contacts with different orchestras and directors. Most importantly, guarantees were needed regarding the requirement that participants would be young students from socially vulnerable sectors. The complete registry of participation was recorded in an extensive fieldwork journal that includes photographs and videos. Ten young men and 9 young women between the ages of 15 and 19 years old who participated in the orchestral activities were interviewed. Additional information was gathered from 6 group interviews with parents, teachers, and orchestra directors. All oral discourses have been transcribed. An inductive process was utilized for the thematic content analysis. Emergent discourse themes were taken into consideration, as well as referential frames (tone of voice, gestures, silences, repetitions, doubts, and others), to build conceptual categories that were representative of the narratives of the interviewees.

La Orquesta Infanto-Juvenil de Hudson [LOIJH] centres its activities at rural school N°24 of La Loma, Hudson, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Most of the population attending this school comes from families of Bolivian descent who conduct their agricultural activities in the areas near the school. *La Sonora de la IAPI* [LSI] holds its activities at the Community Integration Center [CIC] of the Santa María IAPI neighbourhood. This is a poor neighbourhood with a dense population that received safe water sources and sanitation only as of 2012, and some areas still lack sewer systems. Floods are very common as well, as the district is crossed by two streams that hold massive amounts of waste. The neighbourhood is the center of disputes between criminal gangs.

As for the similarities, both are publicly funded projects, have the same repertoire, they invite children and young people from local schools, and have a similar work scheme (instrument classes and integration in orchestral practice, sometimes section rehearsals, and music theory classes). The main differences refer to the type of instruments (Latin American in the IAPI Orchestra) and the location (Hudson in a rural zone and IAPI in a highly precarious popular neighborhood in an urban area).

⁴ IAPI, as per its Spanish acronym, means Argentine Institute for Exchange Promotion, which was the name given to the neighbourhood upon its development in the 1960s.

The Results

The main results of the research organized in 4 themes will be briefly presented: senses of the orchestra, the educational experience (in the orchestra and in the school), future anticipations and some processes in the identity construction.

The Senses of the Orchestra

We decided to divide the senses in two groups. Intra-subjective: includes senses where cognitive, psychological and emotional processes are predominant. Inter-subjective: includes senses that refer predominantly to relational processes.

Intra-subjective Senses

Learn and Have New Experiences. “*Learning new things*” is a very common sense in the stories. In the Orchestra participants learn scores, themes, music. They also learn “*creativity and culture*”.

Likewise, other issues that exceed the musical issues are learned. The Orchestra allows the participants to have experiences that young people identify as only possible from attending, such as “*meeting people,*” “*playing with other orchestras,*” “*playing with teachers,*” “*visiting new places,*” playing “*on stages and places you wouldn't believe.*”

Expressing Feelings and Venting Out. Young people repeatedly express the feeling of “*joy,*” when referring to playing with others, the accompaniment of their teachers, making music, and also about playing in different places (important theaters, trips around the country) that they would not have been able to experience if they did not participate in the Orchestra.

Other positive emotions are exemplified in this narrative: “*never in my life would I have imagined that I would be in an Orchestra playing the anthem, never, I feel such an emotion, a tingle, goosebumps, or for example I like to see how the themes go well and when I stand there are times that I move and it is like I enjoy it, I dance [...]*”

In the Orchestra they can also vent “*anger,*” “*sadness*” and it can be a “*calmer.*” A similar sense is expressed by a young boy: the orchestra allows you to “*free yourself from the problems you have during the week.*” Music “*clears all problems.*”

Motivation and Self-determination. Motivation is key and observed daily in the Orchestra. It is highly motivating to see the different instruments, touch them, see how they sound alone and together with others. The experience of playing different instruments, being able to choose one or another if they do not feel comfortable, are experiences that build motivation, interest and self-determination.

In addition, the learnings, and experiences they have in the Orchestra encourage and motivate the search for other experiences that exceed what is offered in the Orchestra. They can multiply their learning opportunities, install new desires, and

the possibility of developing other interests. An example of this is that they look for scores of other music on the internet, learn other instruments at home or integrate musical bands outside the Orchestra.

To Have a Hobby. Another usual meaning links the experience to “*a hobby*”. The Orchestra is a place to “*have fun and meet new people*.” These senses give an important value to the experience, as a way of socialization. This reflects the function of art as a game (Belfiore & Bennet, 2006).

Inter-subjective Senses

Build Community. The Orchestra is “*a place to be*.” This phrase expressed by a young boy gives the idea of familiarity, of being at ease in the place where one is and with the rest of the people with whom one shares.

Community and Satisfaction are two words almost inseparable from the Orchestra experience. “*We are accompanied*,” “*company*,” “*companions*” are words that sound again and again in the speeches of the participants, and with a highly positive connotation.

Teachers play with their students and intervene pedagogically in the rehearsals. In addition, many families come to listen and accompany the activities that are held.

Fostering Models and Building Supports. The teachers listen to them, “*they treat them well*,” they “*explain*,” “*they always accept you*.” It should be noted that in the Orchestra there is a follow-up of the participants for a long time. These are long term bonds to these adult referents. Teachers know their students in many aspects, not only in musical aspects, but also in regards to personal issues. They talk and share about other topics; about activities they develop in other areas and other issues of their lives. They are companions in external activities (concerts, trips) and play with them (in rehearsals and concerts). These teachers give them recognition: because they see them frequently in the activities of the Orchestra, because they play well, because they develop well.

The Educational Experience in the Orchestra and at School

What do the participants learn in the Orchestra? To answer this question, we differentiate specific learnings of the Orchestra proposal and others more general or transversal⁵.

Specific Learning

Learn an Instrument, Learn Music, Learn to Play in the Orchestra. The different instruments, the sonorities, dedicating time to musical study and meeting others

⁵ One extended version of learning in Orchestra and the relationships between learning in Orquesta and in school can be found in Valenzuela, Aisenson & Duarte (2021)

to rehearse are part of the range of music learning that young people can take from the Orchestra experience.

Care and Hygiene of the Instrument. Participants learn how to clean the instruments and the best way to care for them. It is a key learning in the Orchestra, especially for beginners. Although it is specific to the proposal, this learning is transferable: they generate a disposition towards the objects in general, a particular way of treating personal and community objects, about their care and maintenance.

General or Transversal Learning

Systematic or Deliberate Practice. The observations of the activities are significant examples to illustrate this category: the way in which teachers handle the exercises, the number of times they perform the repetitions, the feedback given by the teachers that serve for new ways of exercising. This category includes information to contribute to the debate on the belief of “talent” in the artistic fields, which is usually quite dangerous, especially for those who are starting activities of this type or are younger. You can play any music if you systematically dedicate time to practice.

Self-knowledge and conformation of self-concept. Multiple quotations of the narratives give an account of changes the participants perceive by taking part in the Orchestra. The changes identified show “self-knowledge” processes as a cognitive capacity for recognition and reflection on one’s own characteristics: personality, interests, values, strengths, weaknesses, among others.

And, it’s also good because they give us our space, it’s a place where they listen to us and *where we can be ourselves* and not become another kind of people [...] It changed me in that, before coming to the Orchestra, and during a period that I was in the Orchestra as well, *I was very antisocial, I did not get along with anyone.* And now, I know how it is to be treated well, how it is to deal with people, as *I know how to express myself more* and I know how to make new friends everywhere.”

Working with Emotions and Emotional Self-regulation. Emotions are an important part of the learning processes. As one director said “*you may be out of tune, but you are not allowed to play unwillingly*”.

The learnings are aimed to recognize, define, explore and express emotions. Also to channel them, if necessary. Learning is directed towards emotional self-regulation.

Sense of Community, Coexistence and Respect. In the Orchestra, participants learn that the individual performance is a function of the general group work. An instrument sounds good if they all sound good together. Real teamwork needs respect for the other, for their times and learning process. In the Orchestra “*They teach you to live with people, and to make music with many people of different ages.*”

Articulation between the Educational Experiences of the Orchestra and the School

Three possible points of articulation were identified: complementarity, contrast, guiding experience.

Complementarity: the orchestra contributes to improving educational pathways

I did not pay attention in school or anything and now I grab anything and I can read it, I can read treble clef, I can read in bass clef, which is like learning to read again, like having a book and having it in another language and you say 'oh well,' and you start reading it, when I *began studying the double bass I began to like to study more, now I have all my school work complete* and everything.

This young woman expresses an explicit association between participating in the orchestra and improving her performance at school. Learning to play the double bass increased her motivation to “study”. Complementarity allows for thinking of the synergetic possibilities between both spaces, orchestra and school.

Counterposition: The Orchestra Shows that another type of Teaching-Learning Process is Possible

Two citations exemplify this category

I_ What's wrong with you at school?

i_ Well, I get *bored, I get bored a lot*, I don't feel what I learn, it doesn't reach me, and, mostly, the *things I learn there, I forget*. And, it seems to me that it's not the way to teach kids my age.

I_ And how do you think it should be?

i_ In a different style maybe, as they do here, as the Scouts, so to speak, *how to learn with them*.

At school *I didn't charge my batteries*, that's it, I stopped doing homework, I didn't want to do anything, *I was lazy [...]* *In the Orchestra I practice, I'm very excited. I want to play well.*

The first quote expresses boredom, and the conclusion that it is better to “learn *with* others than *from* others.” The second is two cuts of the same young person: she feels she is *lazy* at school but she *practices* with “*emotion*” to get it out, in the Orchestra. The way she expresses her feelings place her assuming individual responsibility for her failed school pathway. In counterposition, approaches that follow specific learning methodologies – that broaden the range of action for everyone to access that knowledge – are developed in contrast to a failed, empty or senseless school experience.

Guiding Experience: The Orchestra Facilitates the Transition. The orchestra serves as the facilitator of the transition experience, that is, the orchestra facilitates transitions both between school levels and between the school and other significant

environments. It allows for the construction of strategies to face the different transitions.

One participant commented on the fact that her participation in the orchestra coincided with her last year of high school and that the orchestra helped her redefine and face her future study perspectives. In conversations with a father with two children in the orchestra, he commented that one of them was able to change levels (from elementary school to high school) due to the orchestra, and that his daughter was able to learn how to read and write and learn music theory at the same time

The work in the Orchestra collaborates with emotional self-regulation, allows the exploration of new skills, interests, roles, becoming a hobby that promotes and enhances self-knowledge.

Future Expectations

Different future expectations were identified throughout the narratives:

Future expectations in the learning context

Future expectations are firstly associated with *finishing high school*. Some of the narratives highlight, for example, that in face of the uncertainty of not knowing what to do in the future, you have to “*concentrate on finishing*” high school and only after that see “*what you’re going to do*.” This could be considered as a possible strategy to understand and reflect upon how to face the future. This is known as the *step by step* modality (Aisenson et al., 2018), where one event leads way to the following step in order to continue to advance.

On the subject of *higher studies*, these are considered for many different areas of knowledge, not only for the arts: business administration, tourism, architecture, accounting, systems engineering, and the many types of teaching professions: elementary school, music, double bass, among others. An interesting result worth mentioning has to do with the beliefs of the teachers on the future possibilities the Orchestra provides. The first representation teachers have relative to the future of the participants of the Orchestra is centered around music, being in connection with music, continuing with higher music studies and conservatories.

Future expectations in other significant contexts: work, family, time off, and other social insertions

In addition to paying attention to the future in the educational aspect, young people visualize other activities as well. With more or less intent, these youngsters recreate other roles in their imagination that they wish to build and explore in different areas during the future. *Working* is an activity that appears in the horizon for many of them, as are the free time activities valued throughout the narratives: go to dancing class, play soccer, tryout at a club, start a band, or continue with projects related

to the Scouts, among others. Starting their own family also appears, especially in the voice of women.

Future Expectations as a way to other possibilities in the horizon

This is a conceptual construction that analyzes in depth the developments of the Guidance Psychology research team (Aisenson et al., 2018). Many different attitudes, values, and expectations are identified in the narratives that do not express activities or specific insertions but speak of a particular way of looking at the future.

to see that I keep learning more and more and maybe someday I can go far, like Professor X who's been everywhere which is great, well, I don't know how to say [...]

I_ What does it mean to go far?

i_ Be able to play anywhere, besides playing at Church and all those other things but also be able to play far away, be invited to play at many different places, travel [...]

I_ So what do you see for yourself in a couple of years?

i_ Well... (silence, thinks) *better than now*, at Church already as lead singer (silence) and that's it... I don't know, different from now [...]

Phrases like “*going far*,” “*have respect for others*,” “*I want to continue, even if others say no*,” “*be big, achieve everything I want*,” “*be good*,” construct a narrative of personal value in relation to the present and future that results positive and creative, that denotes an important personal and social well-being. It reflects a particular cognitive operation that expresses self-confidence derived from self-knowledge and the recognition of one's resources and abilities. It refers to a purpose in life, and reflects the active positioning of the subject on stage.

Identity Construction⁶

Two interviews were analyzed for this category to understand some identity construction processes of youth within the framework of the Orchestras, mainly by using the self-construction theory of J. Guichard. The identities built are different in these interviews.

For one of the interviewees, music reflects her horizon, as a counterpoint to her role at Church. Participating in the Orchestra allows her to exercise roles associated with “being a musician,” acquiring knowledge related to the discipline, and build models related to both environments, which seem fundamental for her present and future insertions at Church.

Different quotes show the self-efficacy relative to various musical aspects, “*I already knew how to play*” before coming to the Orchestra, “*I could easily play all the*

⁶ A complete analysis of these results may be found in Valenzuela, Aisenson & Duarte, 2018

songs,” *“It comes easy to me,”* and appear throughout the interview as inherited from a family of musicians. In her words:

Well... we all go to the same Church, they are... they sing, I sing too, *we're all musicians*, and my sister was in the choir, and my brother X too [...]

I_ So you are saying that they are all musicians in your family...

i_ *Yes, we're all musicians, my house is full of instruments*, there's a piano of my brother X, a couple of basses, an electric guitar, charango sets, quenás of my brother, and *violins and guitars of my dad. But all instruments are for everyone.*

E_ And what do your parents do?

i_ My mother is a seamstress and does nothing with music but she understands. She makes dresses and stuff. *My dad... My dad is a musician, thanks to him we are all musicians.* He has a band of Christian Cumbia where he sings and plays the guitar. He used to sing, well, he continues to sing, but his voice is not as strong as it used to be.

To “be a musician” is a central subjective form of identity (in past, present and future). For this young woman “to practice” an instrument is a highly valuable and fundamental task for her to achieve her goals: practice will lead her to “play well” for her objective of becoming a “musician” at Church.

On the other hand, the narrative of the second interviewee is built around a central identity form of: “becoming a soccer player,” music has a second place in the life path of this young man. However, the experience of the Orchestra is key to incorporating a *holding period* for managing the transitions of this time in his life.

Some quotes from the first interviewee are transcribed below to exemplify the results found:

“When you become a free agent and you no longer belong to a club, and have to go and search for another club, they give you a pass. It's a difficult time in my life, because I could be playing for another club... I have to wait a whole year to tryout at a new club.”

“It was very hard for me and now I'm looking for another club where I can tryout and continue with my soccer phase [...] which is something I love.”

Both quotes express the central subjective identity form: become a soccer player (past, present, and future). On the other hand, being a musician is not as central, it is a secondary subjective identity form (in past, present, and future).

“I think there are many kids here that have a great future ahead of them playing in the Orchestra and if they keep coming to the extra classes and on weekends... I think they can go far playing music.”

His present goals are oriented towards the main objective: tryout at a club to become a soccer player. Music and the Orchestra are seen as a hobby and help him during the transition towards the time he joins his next soccer club.



Fig 2. Concert at Centro de Producción Cultural Mercedes Sosa, Quilmes, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Photograph taken on December 2, 2017.

Discussion and Conclusions: Four Chords in Cadence

Based on the sections presented, we present the dialogue with the objectives and the counterpoint of the first presumptions in the light of the results.

Recognition of changes by getting through the experience of Orchestra programs which are expressed in cognitive, emotional or social terms

As can be seen from the senses, as well as in the identified learnings, multiple changes are associated with the passage through the Orchestra. We highlight the value of the experience for the exercise of exploration and assumption of commitments, emotional control, the construction of ties, models, supports, among many others. The skills built are key to facing the lives of the 21st century (UNESCO, 2020).

Expression of positive emotions (well-being) and identification of personal resources associated with these experiences

Different indicators that account for psychosocial well-being were found (Keyes, 1998; Ryff, 1989): self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, purpose in life, social contribution, and social integration, among others.

The multiple knowledge that is built in the Orchestra is meaningful to face the lives of quality work. They exceed the educational proposal of the music, and intersect with other educational experiences (of the school, the family, the community). It should be noted that, although the development of the aforementioned skills is observed, there are no guidance and counselling proposals that allow these young people to *capitalize* this knowledge in terms of learnings for the worlds of work. Also, teachers do not have enough tools to make these transfers possible.

Possibility of narrating more valued life pathways and impact on the identity construction processes

The results show construction of positively valued life narratives. The reflection on “social vulnerability” is interesting: the regulations of these programs specifically target “vulnerable populations”; however, the results show the resistance of these subjects to be nominated as “vulnerable”. They are active subjects who perceive themselves capable of transforming their realities in multiple ways and who experience psycho-social well-being. The question that arises as a dilemma is: how can we strategically dialogue with funding agencies to build lines of action that recognize the barriers and restrictions of these groups, but do not stigmatize them from the very name of “vulnerable?” How can we recognize their empowerment, give positive value to their pathways and at the same time, understand their needs and collaborate with their resolution? These questions remain open in search of new reflections.

Relationships between the Orchestra’s experience and the development of future expectations

The research reports that target these types of projects, highlight that the inclusion in the Orchestra Program is mostly valued for the “opportunities” it generates in terms of the present, for example, as a guarantee of equal access to goods and services from which the most vulnerable are excluded (Finnegan & Serulnikov, 2015). However, this study “doubled the bet” by stating that the *opportunities are for the present and for the future*: it is not only to choose a way of life in the present moment, but to have the possibility of anticipating other ways of life in the future, possible to be achieved.

A key debate for our discipline opens up at this point. Some authors express that not all young people are able to sustain participation in the Orchestra. For example, Wald (2016) affirms that those who manage to sustain their participation in the project are not just any young person but “determined young people”, since those who were in the Orchestra decided, for example, to continue studying in the future or to postpone motherhood in order to sustain these projects. The analysis of the results of this study allows us to provide information that complicates the approach and is shown as an alternative explanation. This study has shown that the Orchestra experience *itself* can promote identity reconstructions: what they experience in the

Orchestra allows them to see a little *beyond*, thus overcoming the logic that privileges the immediate over what takes time, and the short term over planning.

Finally, regarding the meaning of the Orchestra and linked to future intentions we could identify *three groups* of young people. On the one hand, those who hope to study or dedicate themselves in the future to some activity related to music: being musicians, music teachers, and so on. On the other hand, those who like to play music, who study and actively participate in rehearsals and classes; they know that they would like to be related to music in some way in the future, but their expectations are oriented to activities in other areas (neither music nor arts). In this case the Orchestra, in the future, is identified as "*a place to be.*" Finally, a group of young people who enjoy the activities of the Orchestra, it is very important for them in the present, nevertheless, neither music nor the Orchestra have real weight in the story of the future. They signify them as a hobby, an activity to "*have something to do on a Saturday,*" an environment to socialize and achieve important well-being.

The Contributions of the Study

The Subjective Pillar

It can be argued that, in addition to the 3 pillars mentioned in which participation in the Orchestra has an impact: educational, social and cultural, the results account for the postulation of a fourth pillar: the subjective one. The contributions of this fourth pillar are synthesized here: in the Orchestra young people 1) develop processes of self-knowledge and growing achievement of self-determination; 2) exercise motivation in multiple ways and explore emotions; 3) learn coping strategies (cognitive, emotional); 4) construct models and supports; 5) elaborate representations of the future, in which they feel active subjects, producing and creating in multiple domains of life.

In short, the construction of a valued life narrative that allows to integrate the multiple life pathways of its participants.

The "Orchestra Experience" Concept

The results allow us to propose the analytical concept of the *Orchestra Experience*. Experience refers to phenomena that are proper and that make sense to the person. This concept alludes to emotional, cognitive, and pragmatic aspects, which result in an integrated whole and that give life to images of satisfaction and personal fulfillment. The experience is "*difficult to explain,*" as can be seen in the narratives of several participants.

The Orchestra Experience has a meaning of its own, it is an educational experience, but it is also a social one. It denotes quality integration and promotion of valuable narrated futures.

Paraphrasing the concept of “school experience” (Dubet & Martuccelli, 1998), it implies the internalization of norms and rules of the orchestra, the assignment of a singular coherence. As it has been possible to analyze from the stories, the educational experience in the Orchestra and at school can be a dialectical experience of synergy and empowerment for the construction of identity and new educational processes.

Guiding Institutions

The results of this study give support to those results being built by GIPO (Aisenso et al., 2018). Certain socio-educational programs function as Guiding strategies, since their overall proposal accompanies the construction of life pathways, identity and projects of its participants, favoring the array of opportunities.

These results contribute to the socio-community approaches of Guidance and Counselling. They allow to exemplify three key themes for Guidance in community environments: psychosocial transitions, projects and identity construction, within the framework of a specific institutional proposal for disadvantaged populations. These approaches in Guidance and Counselling are key to inform public policies for the design of socio-educational programs for socially vulnerable populations. The final goal is to achieve social justice.

Summary

This study focused on analyzing a specific socio-educational program: Children and Youth Orchestras. However, the results allow us to construct questions from Guidance and Counselling Psychology for the investigation of other socio-educational programs. We highlight its function for the development of meaningful learning for life, construction of positive valued life narratives and significant future projects.

Specific interventions in guidance and counseling with these populations would be very useful, to recover and capitalize on both general and specific knowledge built within the framework of experience. So, this knowledge may be recognized as valid competences for life, to reflect and address transitions and construct life projects and identity. In this way, those with *teaching functions in these programs should be trained*. The program could be enhanced if teachers could access to build conceptual and methodological tools for the understanding of Guidance and Counselling issues, reflecting on the place that the teacher has in the life construction of the participants. The *general training of the psychologist* also deserves reflection. In Argentina, the professional responsibilities imply the possibility of intervening in community and social environments, as well as carrying out actions with objectives of guidance and counselling in the promotion of health. Therefore, it is critical to understand the factors at play in the construction of future projects and identities of these social groups. Likewise, in our country, the laws that regulate the different

educational levels contemplate the right of young people to get guidance and counselling in their educational pathway and therefore the responsibility of professionals to be trained. Therefore, the results of this study, from the perspective of Guidance and Counselling, have allowed to build knowledge that contributes to the training of the psychologist in community contexts, intersecting knowledge of Education and Health.

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