

## **The Results of Socio-Educational Projects on the Human Development of Young People**

**Gustavo de Oliveira Figueiredo<sup>1</sup>**  
**Valentina Carranza Weihmüller<sup>1</sup>**  
**Yansy Aurora Delgado Orrillo<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro/RJ – Brazil

**ABSTRACT – The Results of Socio-Educational Projects on the Human Development of Young People.** This article presents and discusses the results of a participative research with social educators who developed socio-educational projects with young people in favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Through individual interviews and focus groups, within the framework of the Participative-Action-Research (PAR), this study aims to identify and reflect on the effects / results of projects on the human development of young people. The results of the research indicate that social educators perceive a positive effect of interventions, mainly on indicators at the individual level, evidencing limitations of the projects at a collective level.

**Keywords: Human Development. Social Projects. Participative Action Research. Social Transformation. Slum.**

**RESUMEN – Resultados de Proyectos Socioeducativos en el Desarrollo Humano de los Jóvenes.** El trabajo presenta y discute los resultados de una pesquisa participativa con 18 educadores sociales que desarrollan proyectos socioeducativos con jóvenes en 12 favelas de Rio de Janeiro. Por medio de cuestionarios, entrevistas individuales y grupos focales, en el marco de la Investigación-Acción-Participativa (IAP), este trabajo tiene por objetivo identificar y reflexionar sobre los efectos/resultados de los proyectos en el desarrollo humano de los jóvenes. Los resultados de la investigación demuestran que los educadores sociales perciben un efecto muy positivo de las intervenciones en la vida de los jóvenes, principalmente en indicadores a nivel personal, evidenciando aún limitaciones de los proyectos a nivel colectivo.

**Palabras-clave: Desarrollo Humano. Proyecto Socioeducativo. Investigación-Acción-Participación. Transformación Social. Favela.**

## Introduction

It has been known that since the emergence of the Human Development (HD) paradigm, in the late 1980s, youth(s) have been a matter of social concern, and that international organizations are the main promoters of specific guidelines and policies for dealing with young people (Griffin, 2001). Since that time, the international discourse was consolidated from a functional-evolutionary and integrationist vision of youth, understanding it as a *determinant stage* of individual development, in which it is necessary to intervene and *invest* to promote the welfare and the HD.

As Santos (2007) points out, young people are precisely those who most vividly embody the demand for social and cultural change. The focus of this research, interested in reflective and social intervention, is aligned with the vision of interdependence between social-emotional, attitudes and cognitive systems in order to understand the individual and collective aspects of HD in young people. In this way, we understand *young people* as social subjects (Dayrell, 2003; Groppo, 2016) who construct their life trajectories from active experiences, in which their capacities, their powers and also their limitations are in tension. In fact, young people are continually negotiating, making decisions and intervening – transforming or reproducing – their life contexts and conditions of oppression/freedom. We can assume that, in one way or another, social intervention programs based on educational activities are part of the context of youth action, in order to improve the potentialities of subjects and create horizons beyond those determined by unequal and oppressive social conditions and structures. In this sense, approaches from a popular education perspective, not only as a methodology but as a process of reflection and social mobilization (Freire, 2001), can be interesting, because this allows the implementation of socio-educational interventions based on the popular knowledge of the participators subjects (in this case young people).

During the first decade of the 21st Century, an exemplary document about youth was the report published by the World Bank in 2007 entitled *El Desarrollo Mundial y la Próxima Generación* (World Development and the Next Generation) which reaffirmed the need to *invest* in the future of young people and their HD. The report highlighted five fundamental dimensions to be considered: study, work, health, family formation and exercise of citizenship (World Bank, 2007). Thus, the document establishes three orientations for the HD youth policy: i) expansion of opportunities: expansion of access and improvement of health quality and services, 2) increase of capacities for choice opportunities and develop a personal project; 3) offer *second-chance programs* to provide hope and incentive for the recovery of *bad* choices. In the same year, the United Nations published a guide with ten steps for the formulation and implementation of national youth policies, which are adopted by the most part of the Latin American countries (United Nations, 2007).

Brazil followed this international trend during the governments of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2002-2011). Thus, the public policy for youth in Brazil was articulated around two strategic axes: 1) offering opportunities to acquire and use personal and social capacities and guarantee rights based on public services for basic needs, 2) and facilitating the conditions where available opportunities can be taken. In order to structure these policies, specific public bodies were created: the *Secretaria Especial para a Juventude* - SEJ (Special Secretariat for the Youth) and the *Conselho Nacional da Juventude* – CONJUVE (*National Council for the Youth*), as well as executive programs and initiatives. It should be remembered that this political framework established that any person between the ages of 15 and 29 was considered young people (Novares et al., 2006).

These policies included the *Política Nacional de Juventude* – 2006 (Brazilian National Policy for the Youth), which designed and implemented different programs in order to generate opportunities for the social integration of young people in strategic areas (work, education, culture). At the national level, these programs remained most relevant: 1) *Programa Cultura Viva* (*Live Culture Program*), 2) *Programa Escola Aberta* (*Open School Program*); as well as other initiatives disseminated throughout the national territory.

However, youth policies in Brazil have presented contradictions. On one hand, the implementation of specific initiatives have been important for the legitimization of the political field of youth (Carrano, 2013). But, on the other hand, the programs have shown a certain insufficiency, because of the heterogeneity of youth universe, which includes multiple singularities – social, cultural, economic and territorial – that could not be fully considered and evaluated.

In Rio de Janeiro city, in addition to the programs developed by the Federal Government, countless initiatives of non-governmental institutions (NGOs) were implemented with the objective of providing opportunities to young people. This research identified, in several *favelas* in the city, a total of 55 projects of social intervention that offers to young people collective experiences in the arts. However, these interventions still represented isolated initiatives of limited scope, often without continuity and without the necessary financial and political support.

This research started with the idea that it was possible to know and evaluate the effects of the HD paradigm from the approach of the experiences of young participants of social projects. The research design was based on a reflexive work with 18 educators who led such projects. With them, we identified and pinpointed the various problems faced by young people from the training opportunity provided by the educational intervention.

Based on a multilevel conception of HD related to the notion of resilience, we formulated the hypothesis that socio-educational projects in *favelas* – in order to produce real effects and results on young people HD and life – should be conceived and materialized around socio-cul-

tural change, which requires individual, collective and contextual experiences.

In this paper, we present the results of this research in order to problematize the potentialities and limitations of the social projects implemented by NGOs in *favela* contexts from a critical analysis of the repercussions of the HD paradigm in popular youth sectors. Mainly, we analyze the effects contributions to transformation processes at different levels (subjective, relational and socio-collective). Our main criticism is with respect to the perspective of Nussbaum (2000) for whom the concept of HD is especially associated with the improvement of individual capacities.

In this way, we seek to understand how social educators, who work on group-arts intervention projects, perceive their praxis and, also, contribute to the compensation of *social intervention* phenomenon. Mostly, we analyze how the activities of social projects are capable of generating changes in young people's lives and are impacting on the improvement of social conditions in the *favelas*. In a sense, our efforts are in order to analyze experiences and reflections that can contribute to developing socio-educational methodologies and optimizing social projects strategies with youth in poor and exclusion contexts. In this way, we find that praxis and participant methodology will help to find intervention's effects towards better well-being, quality of life and community support in *favela's* contexts.

### **The Paradigm of Human Development and its Repercussion on Socio-Educational Projects for Young People**

We start from a sociological, cultural and political notion of HD that characterized it as a process in which societies pass from conditions of low production and poverty to an acceptable level of human dignity. The *development change* assumes more equal levels of consumption and quality of life and enables experiences of individual and community empowerment. In this sense, we consider that individual and collective levels are involved in HD growth – in terms of potentialities, ideas, energies, and wills –, implying the generation of cultural creation initiatives, a real political engagement, and the strengthening of social networks (Alkire, 2002; Bronfenbrenner, 1987; Sabino, 2005).

Going through the context of the emergence of the notion of HD, we refer to 1948, when the newly created United Nations (UN) publishes the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR). The articles of the UDHR form the basic rights of human beings and, indirectly, launch the minimum guarantees for individual and social development (United Nations, 1948). It is undeniable that despite contradictions and criticisms, this shift in the sense of the international relations, was really significant for the well-being of millions of people around the world and, principally, for the consolidation of a discourse that ratified the need to ensure dignified and more humane standards of well-being and the opportunity to access guaranteed international rights and security.

The discourse of international organizations and their globalization from 1970 onwards greatly influences the understanding of formative processes and life trajectories, mixing with visions concerned with measuring development on the basis of macroeconomic indicators (GDP, levels of industrialization and consumption, technological progress, social modernization, etc.). Consequently, there is the concept of quality of life and a vision of development to be contemplated based on social indicators.

In the 1990s, the United Nations established as a predictor of HD the well-known *HD Index*, calculated according to the following parameters: a) Long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy at birth); b) Education (measured by the adult literacy rate and the combined gross enrolment rate in primary, secondary and higher education); c) Decent standard of living (measured by GDP per capita PPP in dollars). Based on this indicator, the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP) publishes, every year, the *Human Development Report*, a document that contains substantive data disaggregated by countries and regions (United Nations, 2001; 2008).

In a critical perspective on HD, Max-Neef (1994) takes issue with the idea of HD and quality of life from the notion of human needs, defending that these can be satisfied at different levels and with different intensities considering three contexts: a) oneself; b) the social group; and c) the environment. Another critic, Amartya Sen (2000), discusses the meaning and essence of *development* approaching it to the idea of human welfare and as an alternative to the insensitivity and *technocratization* of economic theories. For the author, human well-being and freedom constitute the last priority of economic theory and the maximum objective of development. In this way, Sen's approach differs from economist-style approaches. According to the author, changing the focus of the HD process requires the elimination of the obstacles that avoid freedom: poverty, tyranny, lack of economic opportunities, social exclusion, lack of public facilities and intolerance in repressive States (Sen, 2000).

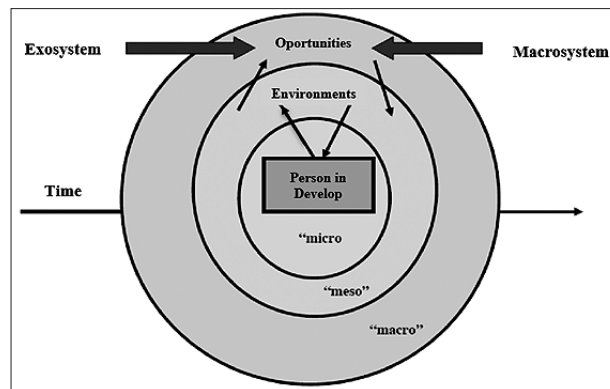
Breilh's (2000) critique is even more incisive, indicating the prerequisites and basic spaces for HD: the humanization of work and consumption, the equity of patterns of family and daily life, integral human security, the protection of the multicultural and critical sense of thought, the spiritual activity of the human being and the multiplication of spaces for artistic and scientific creation devoid of economic manipulations or ideological constrictions. According to our reading, the proposal of Breilh (2000) speaks of an integral HD focused on human needs that must be guaranteed and enforced on a worldwide scale, respecting and attending to diversities.

Considering the still unresolved contradictions around the paradigm of HD, and the dynamic dispute field over its definition, measurement, and implementation, on a global level, equally as much as on a local level, we recall with Arendt (1994) that public issues must be captured from their authentic idiosyncrasy. As Candau (2008) and Santos

(2007) indicate, threats to diversity must be combated as much as inequalities. Therefore, a constructive-critical attitude is recommended regarding the development models proposed by large and hegemonic organizations. This is because, it would be suspicious, not without reason, a lack of transparency about the political perspectives of economic-financial initiatives when they define human ways of being as univocal development models, without considering the complexity of people, communities and contexts.

In order to target the problems of HD visions in social projects in *favelas* oriented to young people, and based on our previous studies (Figueiredo 2008; 2012) this research determined the life of the young person as an analysis unit – what he/she feels, thinks, does and communicates – from the perspective of an observer-educator about the young biographical process (micro-level). A second analytical link (meso-level) has as its analysis unit, the interactive relational exchanges between the youth and the educational agents. Finally, the psychosocial analysis unit corresponding to the entities/institutions (macro-level), understood as a support network that provides protective elements and opportunities, favoring a dignified and empowering development and tending to the improvement of young people's quality of life. At this last level, the role played by public policies promoted by governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations should be considered. Figure 1 shows these levels graphically:

**Figure 1 – Multilevel framing of the dimensions of human development/ personal and social growth perceived by social educators**



Font: Adapted by Figueiredo (2012) from Izquierdo (2009).

As presented in figure 1, the understanding of HD for this research is integrated and multilevel, considering interrelated spheres of development, from the individual to the collective level. Consequently, HD is understood as a process of constant (trans)formation, both as the individual subject (micro level) as the immediate social contexts (communities, neighborhoods – meso level) (Izquierdo, 2009). According to this conception, HD is constituted in the tensions between the individual

and the collective, in the search for a more human life, being transversal to all HD the real possibilities that are enabled and taken to learn, to know, to criticize, to create sense and to procure concrete forms to materialize changes and dreams.

According to Figueiredo (2016), this conception of HD considers *factors of social help and support* (interpersonal networks, participation in social groups and organizations, family containment, friendships, etc.) that are significant in order to develop *resilience*. As Olsson et al (2003) indicates, if there is a correlation between psychosocial problems and risk factors/situations, the effects of multiple protective factors also extend the positive chain of conditions that, taken as a whole, influence personal and social development, consolidating, at the same time, the interpersonal networks. According to the authors, resilience can be defined from a multifactorial and interactive perspective as a dynamic process that considers the interaction between risk/vulnerability and individual and social protection factors. Thus, according to Olsson et al. (2003), three levels of resilience can be defined: 1) *Individual level*: constitutional resilience (biological characteristics); sociability; intelligence; self-regulatory skills; communication skills; self-esteem; 2) *Family and relational level*: family help and support; warmth, structure and monitoring, expectations; relationship with competent adults; pro-social and respectful relationships with norms 3) *Social and community environment level*: socio-economic status; school experience and community/environment support; quality of social services and health services; quality of life in neighborhoods.

According to the guidelines and objectives defined by the socio-educational projects from the HD paradigm, social interventions in *favela* contexts should have an effect on the three levels of resilience since, in addition to contributing to the acquisition of individual competencies and skills, they would also strengthen the support of community relations and networks. In this way, the work of social educators is understood as a source of resilience, by leading and conducting such interventions.

## Method

### *The Epistemological Approach to Participative-Action-Research (PAR)*

In the 1960s and 1970s, a critical-transforming epistemological perspective arose in Latin American countries, articulated to socio-political action: Participative-Action-Research (*Investigación-Acción Participativa*, IAP, Spanish acronym). Having as its main epistemic concern to combine the rational with the experiential, theory and practice, and starting from principles such as social engagement, participating intervention, valuation of popular knowledge and political will, the field of the PAR proposed to help social researchers and popular groups to know and build alternatives to unequal and oppressive living conditions (Fals-Borda, 1987; 1999; 2015; Figueiredo, 2015).

Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda are the main references of the Latin American PAR. The notions of *praxis*, *dialogue* and *transformation* are transversal elements to this methodological approach. Following Gallego (2007) we understand the PAR as a methodological approach that has the double objective of intervening in a certain reality (action) and of creating knowledge or theories about said action. In this sense, Suchowierska and White (2003) indicate that PAR must involve excluded or minority groups in the production of knowledge and be at the same time an educational method and an instrument of awareness. As Balcázar (2003) also points out, following Fals Borda, PAR reaffirms the learning process and the generation of socio-political consciousness among the participants throughout a horizontal dialogue process between researchers and members of any community group.

The PAR perspective also addresses the contexts of communities within the social psychology field. As Rizzo (2009) states, focusing on understanding and transforming the living conditions of people's from human rights, PAR assumes a process in which the social psychologist is an agent who participates in order to improve the quality of life of people, highlighting their capacities and potentialities, from a work that succeeds in empowering persons in diverse socioeconomic and sociocultural contexts.

Pestaña and Alcázar (2009) emphasize that the methodological aspects of the PAR are articulated in a different way regarding the conventional scientific method. The forms of organizing research is less authoritarian and more shared. Suchowierska and White (2003) state that the characteristic key of this type of research is the collaboration between the subjects of the study and the researchers. This contribution is described in several PAR literature as a potential that increases the relevance of the research and improves its social validity. In this sense, Balazar (2003) considers that in the PAR approach the participants are considered as social actors, with their own voices, abilities to decide, reflexive capacity and with a great potential for participating in the research process and build the desired paths of change.

### **Identification and Selection of Collaborators in the Research field: the institutions and socio-educational projects**

The results presented in this work followed the principles of the PAR, maintaining scientific patterns, by means the creation and use of different instruments of internal control and social data validation. In this methodological articulation, the purpose of the research was to carry out an evaluative-formative consultation on social intervention projects aimed at promoting HD with young people living in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro city. The objective of the consultation was to obtain and analyze data on the effects and results of the social-educational projects on HD and youth resilience from the perceptions of social edu-



cators about their work, their relation with young participants and the complex *favela* contexts.

The study was carried out in 12 *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro city; and included 8 Non-Governmental Institutions (NGOs) analyzing, specifically, the social-educational intervention projects implemented in *favela* contexts. The project educators participated as main collaborators in the definition and construction of the data sets. With them, inter-institutional agreements and articulations were established in order to be able to develop the study in these vulnerable contexts, characterized by the deprivation of goods and services, the absence of public policies, social stigmatization and the frequent episodes of urban violence given the confrontations between the Armed Criminal Groups (Silva, 2012, own translation) and the repressive intervention of the state security forces in the framework of the *war against drugs*.

The election of the Institutions took place simultaneously with the elaboration of the study. In the first two years of the research, we identified 36 NGOs that implemented 57 social intervention projects in young people living in *favelas*, and a directory was built detailing the general objectives, activities, and themes of these projects. Those projects, based on group-arts activities (different languages and forms of approach), were specially selected to participate in the research, given the evidence of the potential of this type of mediation for the promotion of HD and the construction of resilience (Figueiredo, 2016). According to this criterion and the interest in participating in the study, 8 institutions and 9 projects were included in the construction and application phases of questionnaires (one of the institutions implemented more than one project). Since some of the projects were implemented in more than one *favela*, we obtained qualified information from 12 *favelas*.

The collaborators were 18 social educators from the NGOs that coordinated or carried out the project activities. In the first exploratory phase, qualitative data was collected with an open approach and under internal control. In the second phase, and based on the exploratory data, structured questionnaires were constructed to collect the definitive data.

## **Instruments and Procedures for Data Construction and Validation**

The combined use of quantitative and qualitative instruments was based on the perspective of the integrated quality-quantity approach proposed by Anguera (2004). According to the PAR methodology, the questionnaires were constructed *ad hoc* with the collaborating educators, in order to attend to the specific situations detected in direct consultations and in observations recorded during the exploratory phase. Questions were listed from a realistic and weighted approach to the projects. Thus, the questionnaires were constructed as a participant evaluative-formative instrument according to the PAR perspective. The

great challenge was to create the evaluation dimensions and the indicators of each category.

The application of the questionnaires was operationalized in two ways: 1) NGOs were encouraged to respond collectively in group meetings; 2) All the institutions were visited *in locus* and individual interviews were carried out according to the availability of the collaborators to validate the results. The application of the instrument consisted of the individual and collective answers on descriptive questions regarding different dimensions of the projects. The educators responded according to their perception of the degree of presence of each question, according to a psychometric scale with values between 0 and 5 (0 *none*, 1 *very low*, 2 *low*, 3 *medium*, 4 *high* and 5 *very high*). Thus, when the value of the median was closer to 5, the higher the degree of presence of that indicator in the daily reality of social educators experiences.

Regarding the obtained outcomes, in this article we include those corresponding to the indicators of the dimension of *effects and results of projects* for HD and the construction of youth resilience. As can be seen in chart 1, we recognized two levels: I) effects and results at individual level (of the young person as a singular subject); II) effects and results at the social-collective level (of the young person as regards the development of sensitivity, responsibility, and social-collective action).

**Chart 1 – Dimension *effects and results of the social projects*.  
Levels and indicators**

Dimension	Effects and results of the social projects	
Level	Individual	Socio-Collective
Indicators	Personal Development	Social Responsibility and Collective Action
	Projects for Future	
	Life Story	

Font: Adapted from Figueiredo (2012).

The necessary reduction of the *universe of descriptors* for each indicator and dimension led to the establishment of classification clusters. This *data condensation process* was carried out according to statistical procedures of tests of significance in order to test the consistency of the scales of the clusters. The SPSS program (factorial analysis and complementary analyses) and reliability tests (Reliability, *Cronbach's Alpha* and *Pearson's Correlation*) were used for statistical analysis. The high degree found in *Cronbach's Alpha* (0.804) statistically proves the high degree of reliability of the study.

The instruments used in this research, designed together with the social educators, were also submitted to a validation process through individual interviews and focus groups in which 4 institutions, 5 intervention projects and 14 social educators participated. It was proposed to evaluate the usefulness/applicability of the instruments to ratify

their relevance and usefulness, as well as to recover perceptions about the importance of participating and dialogic processes for the evaluation of social-educational projects. Another issue raised up, related to the need to continue working on the consolidation of a network among collaborating NGOs in order to exchange ideas and debate on their role in *favela* contexts.

## Results

### *Effects of Socio-Educational Projects on HD of Young People*

Regarding the evaluation of the effects/results of the projects by the educators, we analyzed the dimension from two levels and four indicators. In this way, groups of descriptors referring to thematic areas (grouped as indicators) linked to the processes of change in young people's lives were analyzed.

At the individual level, three indicators were established:

- (i) *Personal development or acquisition of skills;*
- (ii) *Construction of a future project;*
- (iii) *Impact on life Story.*

At the social-collective level, were analyzed descriptors referring to the indicator:

- (iv) *development of a conscious attitude of social responsibility and contributions to stimulate collective actions.*

In table 1, we present the results obtained according to the organization of the categories:

**Table 1 – Indicators results of the dimension *effects and results of the projects*. Degree of presence's mean, Typical deviation and Cronbach's Alpha**

Indicators of the <i>effects and results of projects</i> dimension		Degree of presence's mean	Typical deviation
Level	Indicators		
Individual	Personal Development	4,1407	0,62250
	Future Project	3,4478	0,75848
	Life Story	3,5929	0,70971
Socio-Collective	Social Responsibility and Collective Action	3,0476	0,59872
<b>Cronbach's Alpha = 0,804<sup>1</sup></b>			

Font: Adapted from Figueiredo (2012).

According to the table, we verified that the highest average degree of presence's mean (4.14) was obtained by the *personal development* indicator. It suggests that social educators, when were consulted, had more *in mind*, the project's contribution to the individual development of young people. As can be observed, the other three indicators obtained a lower degree of presence, albeit with nuances.

In Table 2 other relevant data can be observed. That refers to the high Pearson's correlation found between two pairs of indicators:

**Table 2 – Pearson's correlations between indicators of Effects and Results of the projects dimension**

Level	Indicators	Pearson's correlation			
		Individual	Socio-collective		
Level	Indicators	Personal Development	Future Project	Life Story	Social Responsibility and Collective Action
Individual	Personal Development	1,000	,748	,384	,368
	Future Project	,748	1,000	,710	,534
	Life Story	,384	,710	1,000	,351
Socio-collective	Social Responsibility and Collective Action	,368	,534	,351	1,000

Font: Adapted from Figueiredo (2012).

The correlation found between the descriptors of the indicators *Personal Development* and *Future Project* (PD+FP=75%) reaches a percentage correlation close to 75% while the correlation found between the descriptors of the indicators *Future Project* and *Life Story* (FP+LS=71%) reaches a percentage correlation of close to 71%. However, the social responsibility indicator presents the lowest correlation rates relative to individual level indicators.

#### *Personal Development Indicator*

Regarding the *Personal Development*, as can be observed in table 3, the educators perceived that all the aspects described were present to a *high* degree since the overall average of the set of items was very close to 4 scale value.

**Table 3 – Personal Development indicator. Descriptors, Mean and Typical deviation**

DESCRIPTORS	Mean	Typical deviation
Personality/character	4,50	,548
Behavioural change	4,33	,516
Willingness to learn	4,33	,816
Communication skills	4,33	,816
Ethics / moral	4,17	,983
Intelligence	4,17	,983
Entrepreneurial spirit	4,17	,983
Social skills	4,00	1,095
Wishes administration	3,83	,983
Emotional skills	3,83	,983
Cognitive skills	3,83	,983
Social responsibility	3,83	1,169
Bio/physiological development	3,67	1,033

Font: Adapted from Figueiredo (2012).

According to these data, we observed that the effects and results of the projects were mainly related to the development of *personality and character, reorientation and/or change of behaviors*, perceived stimulus in the *desire to learn new knowledge*, development of *communicative skills; capacity to innovate and undertake new actions* and development of *social skills*.

Although also highly valued, the results and effects of projects are less frequent in aspects related to *biological and/or physiological development; commitment and social responsibility; cognitive and emotional competencies* and the *ability to manage dreams and desires*. It should be noted that none descriptors received a rating less than 3.5, which allows us to affirm that all the descriptors proposed for this indicator were perceived as inherent to the personal growth of young people in relation to *skills and maturity*.

As we said, in the outcomes of the *personal development* dimension, all the indicators received a high degree of presence. The best result was on the *personality and character* of the young people, immediately followed by the expansion of their *communication skills* and their *interest in educational processes* with an increase in their *desire to learn new knowledge*.

Also relevant is the high potential of projects to *change the behavior* of young people, with the development of a sense of *ethics and morality*, the expansion of their *intelligence*, their *entrepreneurial capacity* and their *emotional, communicative, cognitive and social competences*. Therefore, from the perspective of social educators, the intervention projects carried out in Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* had a very positive effect on the *personal development* of young people with very favorable results on a personal level and a high impact on the development of their *intelligence* and on their positive positioning in the social context.

Our conclusions agree with Oliva (2004) when he states that in the adolescent stage, young people are stimulated by many social factors that lead them to face a series of challenges and tasks; to assume commitments and attitudes that will help them to build their personal identity and to initiate a certain personal evolutionary trajectory. All his/her experiences during these years are going to have lasting effects on his future development, although not necessarily irreversible.

### *Projects for the Future Indicator*

Regarding the development of a future project, we can observe that aspects most related to the individual capacity, that are independent of socio-cultural environment support, were those that received a higher score, as can be seen in table 4.

**Table 4 – *Projects for the Future*. Descriptors, Mean and Typical deviation**

DESCRIPTORS	Mean	Typical Deviation
Dreams administration	4,00	1,000
Future perspectives	4,00	1,000
Spectrum of possibilities	4,00	1,225
Responsibility	4,00	1,000
Personal motivation	4,00	1,000
Personal project	3,80	1,304
Attitude changes	3,80	,837
Planning/organization	3,60	1,342
Coherence of project life	3,20	1,304
Economic/material support	3,20	1,304
Community support	2,60	1,673
Family support	2,40	,894

Font: Adapted from Figueiredo (2012).

So, the management of *own individual dreams*, the construction of *new future perspectives*, the ability to analyze the spectrum of different *future possibilities*, the *sense of responsibility* for own life and future plans, as well as *individual personal motivation* were aspects valued by the educators to a *high* degree (value around 4). With a *medium-high* degree (values between 3.5 and 4), the following aspects were found: the acquisition of tools to *develop and undertake a personal future project*, the *desire to make effective changes in attitude and/or behavior* and the *ability to plan and organize*. To a *medium* degree, but with a decreasing tendency (value between 3.5 and 2.0), we found the capacity to perceive the *coherence of the personal life project*, as well as the *material and economic support*. The aspects related to *family support*, as well as *community support*, were valued by educators with low scores, being the degrees of these descriptors the lowers in the *future project* dimension.

In this sense, we can say, there are very positive social-educational intervention effects in the construction of *future perspectives*, in the *administration of dreams*, in the *widening of the spectrum of possibilities*. These factors make possible a change in their *personal responsibility* and *attitude*, potential elements that strengthen their reflexive, organizing and planning capacities.

Vygotsky (1931) allows us to broaden the vision of the process of HD when he affirms that development is characterized, first and foremost, by the production of dynamic – biological and cultural – changes. In this perspective, development superimposes culture over the processes of growth, maturity and organic development, forming a unique process. The changes that take place on both planes (biological and cultural) intercommunicate and constitute a unique process of biological-social personality formation.

### *Life Story Indicator*

Regarding the *Life Story* indicator, it should be noted that it presented difficulties for educators. In the validation meetings, the capacity of the educators able to respond to this descriptor was discussed – half of them did not respond. They argued that were not qualified for such a response because they did not have information about young participant’s trajectories after their time in the projects.

**Table 5 – Life Story. Descriptors, Mean and Typical deviation**

DESCRIPTORS	Mean	Typical deviation
Individual effort	4,00	,816
Family changes	3,75	,957
Reflection on the past	3,75	,500
Future perspectives	3,75	1,258
Dreams realization	3,50	1,291
Subjective changes	3,50	,577
Professional changes	3,25	1,258

Font: Adapted from Figueiredo (2012).

As observed in Table 5, educators indicated that the change in *individual effort* and *dedication* was the aspect with the *highest* degree of presence (value 4). The other descriptors of this indicator obtained an average numerically higher than 3, also evidencing a degree of valuation from *medium* to *high*. In relation to the three least valued descriptors (*subjective changes*; *professional changes* and *dreams realization*), we observed that socio-educational projects had limited real effects, in spite of being aspects considered important by educators.

*Social Responsibility and Collective Action Indicator*

Regarding the effects of the projects on the development of *social responsibility* and the *capacity to implement collective actions* in the communities, Table 6 shows that no aspect was highly valued.

**Table 6 – Social responsibility and collective action. Descriptors, Mean and Typical deviation**

DESCRIPTORS	Mean	Typical deviation
Training monitors	3,88	1,356
Community engagement	3,62	1,061
Collective actions	3,62	,744
Community engagement	3,50	,926
Leadership	3,50	1,069
Community intervention	3,25	,886
Volunteering	3,25	1,488
Mobilization alliances	3,12	,641
Neighborhood association	2,75	1,165
Political participation	2,75	1,282

Font: Adapted from Figueiredo (2012).

As can be observed, the descriptors of this indicator presented a valuation around 3 points, which indicates a *medium* degree of presence. The low level of two descriptors should be highlighted: the *participation of the youth in the neighborhood association* and the *participation of the youth in the local policy of the favelas*. Both aspects received low scores (value less than 3), indicating that socio-educational projects are not influencing these aspects of youth HD.

Even within this indicator, the descriptors that obtained the highest valuation, in decreasing order, were: the *participation of young people in the training of other young people considered monitors* of the project; the development of the *sense of responsibility and community engagement* in the *favela* which they live; the development of the *capacity to organize and implement collective actions*; the active *participation in community activities*; the capacity of *action leadership*; the *engagement with other social interventions* in the community; the exercise of the *voluntary practice* and, finally, the *capacity to mobilize people, groups and associations for the realization of activities*.

**Final Considerations**

The presented research identifies the evaluations and views of social educators about the effects and results of socio-educational projects in *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro city, regarding the HD of young participants. As observed, according to the educators, the projects influenced, and to a greater extent, those individual aspects linked to *personal development* and the possibilities of carrying out *future projects*. In this



sense, the indicators that received the greatest value were *personality and character development, behavioral changes, desire to learn, communication skills, ethics and morals, intelligence, entrepreneurship, social skills, individual effort, dream management, future perspectives and possibilities, responsibility and personal motivation*. At the other end, the indicators corresponding to the *socio-collective level* of HD obtained the lowest values. The least valued descriptors were *community support, family support, neighborhood association and political participation*. According to these results, some theoretical considerations can be made about the HD model that is put into play in socio-educational projects in *favelas*, and how this action framework allows/limits the social intervention capacity of the projects.

Regarding the effects of intervention projects on the *Life Story* of young people, we conclude that there is a great stimulus in the expansion of the individual effort to change their life situation. It is also possible to infer that important family changes occur in the story of young people who participate in intervention projects and that the ability to reflect on their past and the construction of future perspectives are aspects that impact their Life Story by participating in social interventions. It is also concluded that intervention projects have a high impact on the self-esteem and personal motivation of young people who are beginning to develop the capacity to project a future different from that determined by their socio-cultural *favela* contexts.

As we identified at the beginning of this paper, there are different perspectives on HD. The hegemonic perspectives focus on the individual (in this case, the young) and on his/her capacity and power to, individually, solve the problems and vicissitudes of a productive and integrated life. This, undoubtedly, is the vision of international organizations such as the World Bank, those entities responsible for globally disseminating discourses and recipes that are adopted in different contexts in regional, national, and local scales.

This individual, economic, and integrationist vision permeates the social projects analyzed. However, their actions and objectives are not limited to this single level of results. The multi-level approach adopted in this research (Izquierdo, 2009) allowed transcending this perspective focused on the individual to recognize the *meso* and *macro* dimensions that conditionate or make possible HD of young people in poor and vulnerable populations. In this regard, the research carried out also recognized the assessment of social educators on group, collective, associative and political aspects, despite having been found that social projects have a lesser impact on these Elements. In other words, this study made it possible to verify that, according to the perception of educators, social projects in *favelas* have a significant impact on personal development factors (micro level) and minor consequences for environments (meso) and opportunities (macro). Thus, it can be noted that the strategies of HD made possible by social projects in *favelas* have been significant for the construction of individual resilience and to a lesser extent for relational and social levels of resilience (Olsson et al., 2003).

Our results allow us to ratify Gardner's statement (1994) and conclude that when young people are involved in rich and engaging educational programs that invoke a wide variety of modes of representation; when they have the opportunity to interact and communicate with individuals in a learning situation with horizontal dialogue and when they participate in integrating ways, these young people take advantage of the opportunity to promote their HD.

Based on the above, we can affirm that despite the limitations, the social intervention projects analyzed have been effective in promoting the HD of young people in *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro city, by expanding resilience factors at the individual level and providing elements of social protection in contexts of exclusion. Future research should incorporate other elements for the construction of a more just and egalitarian world. We refer to the task of overcoming the economist and integrationist version of HD and broadening it to include work on persons and populations that fights for: recognition of differences, cultural and collective rights, autonomy, environment issues, a free development of sexuality, the construction of community and social networks, among many other relevant matters.

Likewise, regarding to social institutions, initiatives aimed at young people in *favelas*, we consider it is important based on the experiences of young people, promoting real and effective collective actions, as well as promoting dialogue with other initiatives that involve young people and propose transformations, in the search for a social transformation, articulating individual and collective aspects.

We recognize the limitation of our study regarding not investigate young people's perceptions of intervention projects. In fact, social educators recommended young participant's validation in future research, mainly, about the impact of the projects on young life story. Even so, despite having approached the problem primarily from the perspective of social educators, we believe that the results of the research may be useful to subsidize the construction of more effective public policies for youth.

About epistemological matters, the study revealed the potential of PAR as a significant resource for the evaluation of educational programs and for the process of permanent formation of educator's praxis. We believe that it is possible to refine the instruments used in this research and to adapt the evaluative-formative design for a broadening of the study in other contexts, and even to think of tools that allow for international comparisons and syntheses. The positive analysis of the educators in the social validation of the study is demonstrated when they affirm that the participation in the design of the research generated a favorable environment for the process of the activities and projects evaluation. All institutions assert that the instrument can and should be used as a tool for monitoring and evaluating the activities of intervention projects.

Regarding the evaluation of the institution's participation in research, we came to the conclusion that it is advisable to propose this

participatory evaluative practice to other institutions, because we identified the great interest (and also the need) of the centers to participate in a process of evaluation of their activities by an external observer, which generated a new outlook on the work's process and the projects activities.

In conclusion, we can mention that the PAR process increased the interest of educators for the formation of a network among the collaborating institutions of the study where a progression of exchange of ideas, a more collective reflection about the role of institutions in changing the situation in which they operate and in promoting the human and social development of the *favelas* can be established. Finally, we suggest to national and international organizations that they encourage the creation of an observatory of social intervention projects with youth to promote the exchange of experiences among scientists, social educators and young people at different levels of decision making and social action<sup>2</sup>.

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## Notes

1 The high reliability value found (Cronbach's Alpha maximum = 1,0) indicates the consistency of the scales included in each cluster.

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The Results of Socio-Educational Projects on the Human Development of Young People

**Gustavo de Oliveira Figueiredo** has a degree in Dentistry, Ph.D. in Psychology of Communication, Assistant Professor of the Universidad Federal de Rio de Janeiro, Center for Educational Technology for Health, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2724-8826>

E-mail: [gfigueiredo.ufrj@gmail.com](mailto:gfigueiredo.ufrj@gmail.com)

**Valentina Carranza Wehmüller** has a degree in Social Communication from the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina. Magister and current doctoral student of the Postgraduate Program in Education in Science and Health at the Universidad Federal de Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Becaria OAS - GCUB 2015, CAPES, Brazil.

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1559-8354>

E-mail: [cw.valentina@gmail.com](mailto:cw.valentina@gmail.com)

**Yansy Aurora Delgado Orrillo** holds a bachelor's degree in Collective Health, Master of Science in Health Education, Center for Educational Technology for Health.

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9367-9459>

E-mail: [yansy.delgado@gmail.com](mailto:yansy.delgado@gmail.com)

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