

EVALUATION OF THE FAMILY GUARDIAN
PROGRAMME 2009-2019.

ACER BRASIL

2020

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Evaluation of the results of the Family Guardian programme

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Introduction.

“Family Guardian” is a programme of ACER Brasil, a civil society organisation located in Diadema, São Paulo since 1993. During its history, it has been using strategies to promote the holistic development of children and adolescents living in a country that is among the five most unequal, and one of the most violent in the world (IPEA 2018). They are children and adolescents from families with a life history and social relations marked by different types of violence, expressed in the high numbers of homicide, femicide, assault – engrained in everyday interpersonal relationships. They are families living in a society that has no solidarity with their pain, with unequal means to raise their children, as Sergio Adorno¹ explains.

In this context, how can children and adolescents be protected from situations of violence and other serious violations of their rights, when they take place within their family (with an intergenerational history marked by violence, exclusion and poverty) and the violators are their parents? How should they be protected while preserving their right to family and community life at the same time?

Over the past ten years, ACER Brasil has developed a methodology to help the extended and socio-affective families of children in this situation, by offering support for them to assume their guardianship and create a stable, safe and reliable environment that favours their holistic development. Meanwhile, the parents are assisted by the Service of Protection and Specialized Monitoring of Families and Individuals / PAEFI, delivered by the Municipal Social Welfare Secretariat.

In view of the recurrent positive results achieved with the children and adolescents served by the Family Guardian Programme and its implementation over ten years, ACER Brasil decided to conduct an evaluation in 2019 - which is presented below.

In the first part, a contextualization of the situation of children and adolescents in the municipality is made, for example the educational, health, socioeconomic status of their family, etc. In the second part, the history of the Family Guardian Programme is presented and in the third, its place within the System for the Guarantee of Children’s Rights is presented. In the fourth part, there is a brief description of the replication of the programme in Santo André, São Paulo and Felipe Guerra, Rio Grande do Norte. The actions required for the intervention to be reproduced in other locations are listed in part five and in part six, the operational and methodological aspects of the Programme are explained. In part seven, the research methodology is presented and in the eighth, the results. Finally, the most significant conclusions are recorded.

¹ Interview with Sérgio Adorno for the Nexo newspaper, 12th January 2017. Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gj2odAHhPA4> accessed 15th January 2020.

1. The situation of children, adolescents and their families.

As a Brazilian city, Diadema - located in the State of São Paulo, reflects the high violence, vulnerability and social inequality seen in the country for many years, as the living conditions of families are historically marked by a city with a high population density, intense growth in a short period, lack of urban planning and social, income and racial inequality. In this context, the rights violations committed against children and adolescents, officially registered by the Municipal Social Welfare Secretariat in Diadema, are child labour, neglect, abandonment, physical, psychological and sexual violence. These are the main reasons for the need for social welfare, whether for the elderly, women or children and adolescents.

As highlighted in ACER Brasil's Political Pedagogical Project in 2019, household income is the lowest in the region and at least 30% of it is committed to housing. As a result, 10% of children in the municipality are living in absolute poverty and 30% in vulnerability.

Other rates above the region's average are for infant mortality and homicides. In Diadema, infant mortality occurs more frequently in the first week of life and reached a rate of 12.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2010, above what the WHO considers acceptable: 10 deaths for every 1,000 live births. With regards to homicides, the data collected indicate that the city has the 2nd highest homicide rate in the region, exceeding the rate of the city of São Paulo. Most deaths occur by firearms to men, mostly black or mixed race, aged between 15 and 34 years old.

Regarding educational performance, 27% of children in the 5th grade of elementary school have difficulties in reading and interpreting text and 36% are unable to solve mathematical problems. Performance worsens until the 9th grade, when 57% have difficulty reading and interpreting text and 83% cannot solve mathematical problems. Most of the dropouts occur when teenagers reach the 1st grade of high school. 36.6% of the population have incomplete elementary education, but are literate, 19.3% have complete elementary and incomplete secondary education and 31% have complete secondary education. Only 7% of the population of Diadema has completed higher education. Around 24% of people aged 15 and 24 are unemployed and out of school or have only completed elementary school.

2. Creation of the Programme.

The Family Guardian Programme was created within this socioeconomic context, from the professionals' perception of the child's situation and the common family dynamics in the Eldorado neighbourhood, located in Diadema / SP. They noticed that many times, children and adolescents who circulated on the streets and or had difficulty attending programmes and services offered in the region, had parents involved in adverse situations (for example, abused alcohol and other drugs, lived on the streets or were incarcerated, presented mental disorders) that prevented them from exercising their care and protection; therefore, their extended and affective families (grandparents, uncles, godmothers, godparents, etc.) took some protective action. And there were also those who, in a short period of time, lived with their grandmother and then returned to live with their mother, and returned to institutional care or were admitted to *Fundação Casa* (São Paulo State youth prison system) - in a constant coming and going.

The perception of ACER Brasil's professionals was that the development of the children and adolescents took place in a family environment marked by insecurity, instability, and also by several violations of the children's law and, often, the most serious of them: violence. But even though they perceived the violations of rights committed by parents, professionals also recognized the existence of affective bonds between children, adolescents and members of their extended or socio-affective family.

In search of care methodologies for children and adolescents in this situation, Jonathan Hannay - then general secretary of ACER Brasil, anthropologist and social educator of children, adolescents and their families in situations of high vulnerability and risk - systematically discussed with the institution's team, dysfunctional aspects of foster care in England, experiences in which extended families did not have their needs met in New York's social programmes and services; and also the difficulties of implementing one of ACER Brasil's first projects, of foster care for street children. Another one of his experiences and learning brought further contribution: his anthropological studies, carried out in Jericoacoara / CE, using genograms to trace the functioning of family systems and that showed the care of children and adolescents by their relatives, godparents, godmothers or friends of the family, either for protection or to have access to better opportunities for their development.

To design the programme, the ACER Brasil team found international references presented by Jonathan Hannay. Among Brazilians, Irene Rizzini's² books and lectures were an important source. Her reflections contributed deeply to broaden the understanding of street children and adolescents, with family dynamics similar to those observed in Eldorado / Diadema; the understanding of the right to family and community upbringing. Another conceptual and methodological framework was the dialogue with Sylvia Reyes in 2003, who created the methodology for working with children, adolescents and families at JUCONI (*Junto com los niños* - a social organization present in Mexico and Ecuador). Subsequently, in 2008, the participation of Jonathan Hannay in the Safe Families, Safe Children working group strongly influenced the methodology of ACER Brasil and, especially, of the Family Guardian Programme

With the hiring of Kelly Lima by ACER Brasil, to coordinate and implement the Family Guardian Programme, the Universal Social Welfare System (*SUAS* in Brazil) - mainly the centrality of family in all social welfare actions - and the National Plan for Family and Community Upbringing also come to occupy a prominent place in support of the programme's methodological strategies.

² Mainly two books: *Vida nas Ruas. Crianças em Adolescentes nas ruas: trajetórias inevitáveis?* Edições Loyola, 2003; and, *Acolhendo crianças e adolescentes. Experiências de promoção do direito à convivência familiar e comunitária no Brasil.* Editora Cortez, 2007.

3. Integration with the system for the guarantee of children's rights.

Since 2009, the Family Guardian Programme has been registered with the Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents / *CMDCA* in Diadema / SP. That same year, subsidized guardianship became part of the policy for the care of children and adolescents, formulated by the *CMDCA* of Diadema / SP, with provision of financial resources for this purpose, from the Municipal Children's Fund (*FUNCAD*). In 2013, it was incorporated into the municipal Social Welfare plan. Consequently, from 2009 to December 2019, ACER Brasil had a partnership with the Municipal Social Welfare Secretariat, to finance part of its execution. The other part of the funds came from ACER Brasil's principal funder, CARF-UK³.

The Diadema Municipal Social Welfare Secretariat categorised the Family Guardian Programme as a special protection service of medium complexity, therefore in its organisational structure, it considered it as one of the services of the Specialized Centre for Supporting the Extended Family, referenced in the Specialized Reference Centre of Social Welfare / *CREAS*. As an integral part of the municipal social welfare policy, the Family Guardian Programme team systematically received training, supervision, evaluation and monitoring from *CREAS*, characterising a financial and also technical-methodological relationship.

As stated above, in the period from 2009 to 2013, the Programme delivery received part funding from *FUNCAD*. Between 2009 and 2010, the target was 45 children and adolescents living in the Eldorado region (southern zone of the municipality of Diadema / SP). From 2011 until 2013, this target increased to 60, residents in the same territory.

In 2013, the main funding source became the Municipal Social Welfare Fund - remaining so until 2019. Also in that year, the territory, initially limited to the southern part of Diadema, was changed to serve residents of all regions of the municipality; and expanded the service target from 60 to 120 and was then reduced to 80 children and adolescents in the last two years.

In addition to the links with the Municipal Social Welfare Secretariat and the *CMDCA*, the relationship between the team of professionals from ACER Brasil and the technical sector⁴ of the Judiciary of Diadema was also fundamental – from the beginning, the referral of families came from them, as stated in the first Evaluation Study of the Family Guardian Programme⁵ published in 2011.

³ The main funder of the work is CARF-UK, founded in 1997 in London / UK. CARF-UK is run entirely on a voluntary basis and all the money raised is used by ACER Brasil, in its work in Diadema/SP.

⁴ The Brazilian courts have their own technical support service made up of social workers and psychologists which prepare reports on which to base judgements and other decisions.

⁵ Available in Portuguese at:

<http://www.acerbrasil.org.br/arquivos/publicacoes/AssistenciaSocial/avalia%C3%A7%C3%B5es/FG.pdf>

3.1. Public policy for supported guardianship.

The political discussions held at the Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents contributed to the understanding of supported guardianship as a strategic action of the municipal policy for the care of children and adolescents, including providing resources from the Child and Adolescent Fund for this purpose. Since then, ACER Brasil, through Jonathan Hannay, has been defending, in different spheres of power, changes in the laws regarding the promotion and defense of the rights of children and adolescents, especially those without parental care and under the legal custody of their extended families.

Among these actions, is the articulation with the Diadema City Council to regulate the Family Guardian Programme in the municipality. Thus, in 2011 the programme became public policy in municipal law No. 3087, of March 14, 2011, which instituted both the Supported Guardianship Programme and the Foster Family Programme - proposed on the initiative of Councilman Orlando Vitoriano.

Later, in 2016, through the mediation of the parliamentary advisor of the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers - CONTAG, Jonathan Hannay presented a modification to the text - written by him and Odair Prescivalle, of the bill that was being processed under the rapporteur of Federal Deputy Carlos Gomes (PRB / RS, congressperson of this 2015, currently with mandate 2019-2023). Currently, it is pending as bill 7047/2014, by Deputy Paulo Freire (PL / SP, congressperson since 2011, with current mandate 2019-2023), is under analysis by the Commission for Security and Family, in the Chamber of Deputies.

Since May 2017, ACER Brasil, represented by Jonathan Hannay, has been part of the National Movement for Family and Community Coexistence - MNCFC. And through Kelly Lima, at the Association of Researchers of the Centre for Studies and Research on Children and Adolescents - NECA, as an associate since 2018.

In December 2016, the then Ministry of Social Development discussed ways to avoid the institutionalisation of children from 0 to 6 years old, when it invited Jonathan Hannay, representing ACER Brasil, to present the Family Guardian Programme to the team. Subsequently, in the first semester of 2017, he was one of the 60 invited participants - representatives of States and Municipalities - to discuss alternatives for guardianship in an extended family as a way of preventing institutionalisation and as a family reintegration strategy. He was also present at a second meeting, held in April 2018, to validate the guidelines by representatives of institutions such as the State Collegiate of Social Assistance Secretaries - COEGEMAS, the Association of Child and Youth Magistrates, the Permanent Commission of Child and Youth Prosecutors. Based on the discussions held in 2018, the Ministry, in partnership with the UNDP, hired the consultant Veruska Galdini to carry out a research in order to underpin the design of a programme to support extended families who are guardians of children and adolescents without parental care.

4. Replicating the Programme.

With its successful implementation in Diadema / SP, ABC Trust (United Kingdom)⁶, a long-term partner of ACER Brasil, launched a challenge: to prove the model designed to care for extended families, guardians of children and adolescents without parental care in another municipality. To this end, ABC Trust allocated a total amount of £ 90,000, spread over a three-year period and an annual service target of 60 children and adolescents.

4.1 Santo André/SP.

With the support of ABC Trust, the Family Guardian Programme was replicated in Santo André / SP, from December 2014 to November 2016.

Santo André is a municipality located in greater São Paulo, specifically in the ABC region - as is Diadema. According to the census conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in 2010, it had 676,407 inhabitants.

The choice by the municipality of Santo André for replication was motivated by the ease of dialogue, since the Director of Special Protection in the municipality was Marcia Leal. She had prior knowledge of the Family Guardian Programme, because in 2009, when the programme was approved to receive funds from the Municipal Fund for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, Marcia Leal was a councillor in the Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Diadema and participated in of the project selection committee.

With Marcia Leal and her team, the most suitable territory for programme implementation was defined and both the model of operation and the categorisation of a special protection programme of medium complexity were maintained. Delivery started after the institution and the programme were registered with the Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents of Santo André; and the establishment of an office, in partnership with Banco do Povo Crédito Solidário.

From this experience, two learnings were highlighted by ACER Brasil: the creation of a flow to grant child custody to the extended family, composed of the municipality's Legal Aid office, the courts and the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB). And the understanding that ACER Brasil has an administrative structure and technical capacity to replicate the Family Guardian Programme. However, becoming registered and opening an office in each municipality in which it operates generates an unsustainable cost. If it is to be contracted to deliver the programme, ACER Brasil has the necessary administrative structure and technical capacity to deliver.

4.2. Felipe Guerra/RN.

In line with what was learned in Santo André / SP, ACER Brasil adjusted the replication design in Felipe Guerra / RN, by offering consultancy services under contract to municipal governments.

Felipe Guerra is a municipality located in the State of Rio Grande do Norte, with a population of 5,734 thousand, according to the 2010 census conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE).

⁶ ABC TRUST was a British organisation established in 1998 to fund and give technical support to community organisations working with children in Brazil. It ceased to operate in January 2020.

In 2015, João Valério Neto, representing the Municipal Secretariat of Social Assistance of Apodí / RN, presented his experience of social work with families, at the seminar on alternative care for children and adolescents without parental care, organized by ACER Brasil in Diadema / SP. In 2016, Jonathan Hannay made a reciprocal visit to Apodí / RN to exchange methodologies. Following these discussions, the need for supported guardianship in the region of Rio Grande do Norte became more evident.

When João Valério Neto assumed the articulation of the councils in the municipality of Felipe Guerra / RN and raised funds through the Municipal Fund for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (FUNCAD) for the implementation of the Family Guardian Programme in the municipality, ACER Brasil was hired for training and supervision of programme implementation. Thus, in 2019, Kelly Lima gave an initial training course for the social work professionals and remotely, carried out monthly technical supervision for the implementation team. During this period, Jonathan Hannay supported the drafting of the municipal law and decree for granting income support. Then, at the end of that same year, the two visited the city for evaluation and participation in a regional event, to share their experience with the team of Felipe Guerra / RN. In the final evaluation of the process, the need for continued technical support and supervision was identified to consolidate the implementation of the programme. Thus, the contract was renewed for 2020, adding support in the legal area, in partnership with the lawyer, hired by the Secretariat of Social Assistance.

5. Dissemination.

ACER Brasil, over the years, has worked to publicise the methodology and experience of social work with families developed by the team of the Family Guardian Programme, mainly through two members of its team, Jonathan Hannay and Kelly Lima.

Two awards are highlighted. In November 2014, the Family Guardian Programme was awarded 1st place in the first Social Innovation Award of the State of São Paulo, among Special Protection Services - Medium Complexity of the State of São Paulo, in two categories, state and southern region of the State of São Paulo. And the other, in 2019, Jonathan Hannay was among the three finalists for the Visionaris Award, out of a total of 85 registered social entrepreneurs⁷.

The Family Guardian Programme was featured in two documentaries: one entitled “*Finding the way home*”⁸ and another “*ACER Brasil*”⁹. And this experience corresponds with the methodology for

⁷ This prize was created by the Swiss bank UBS in order to recognise and support the work of social entrepreneurs. The other finalists in this edition were: *Atados*, *Organização Cidades sem Fome* and the winner, *Quero na Escola*. More information at: <https://ubs-visionaris.com.br/>.

⁸ *Finding the Way Home*. Directed by Jon Alpert, Matthew O'Neill. London: HBO/LUMOS, 2019. Available at: <https://www.hbo.com/documentaries/finding-the-way-home> [Accessed 18/06/2020].

⁹ ACER Brasil. Directed by Pedro Sanches. São Paulo: Tango Bililica, 2019. Available at: <https://vimeo.com/360059804>, [Accessed 18/06/2020].

social work with families and children and adolescents at risk and vulnerability, detailed in the book “*Safe Families, Safe Children*”¹⁰; and is also described in the book “*Finding the Way Home*”¹¹.

In recent years, the institution has made investments to produce articles with its conceptual and methodological base. Some of them are available on the ACER Brasil website, others are in press, awaiting publication. They are as follows:

- HANNAY, Jonathan. et al. **Programa de apoio à família extensa: prevenindo e reduzindo o acolhimento institucional** - Uma experiência brasileira. 2016. Available at: http://www.acerbrasil.org.br/arquivos/publicacoes/AssistenciaSocial/Livros/Artigo_Final_FG_08_2016.pdf Accessed: 19 June 2020.
- GALDINI, Veruska et al. **Estudo Avaliativo do Programa Família Guardiã**: Uma experiência na aplicação da Política Nacional de Convivência Familiar e Comunitária. 2010. Available at: <http://www.acerbrasil.org.br/arquivos/publicacoes/AssistenciaSocial/avaliacoes/FG.pdf> Accessed: 19 June 2020.
- HANNAY, Jonathan. et al. **Formal Kinship Care: Preventing and minimising the institutionalisation of children** – a Brazilian experience. 2016. Available at: http://www.acerbrasil.org.br/arquivos/publicacoes/AssistenciaSocial/Livros/FamilyGuardianArticle09_2016.pdf Accessed: 19 June 2020.
- GALDINI, Veruska et al. **Bases Metodológicas do Programa Família Guardiã**. ACER Brasil. Campinas, 2019. In Press.
- LIMA, Kelly et al. **O Direito de Conviver em Família para Crianças de 0 a 03 anos sem Cuidados Parentais**. Família Guardiã – uma Experiência em Diadema/SP. Campinas, 2018. In Press.

Since 2016, there have been many national and international events in which Jonathan Hannay and Kelly Lima have participated and presented the experience of social work with families. The Family Guardian Programme was presented to specialists in the field of social or socio-legal work, at conferences, international seminars, congresses held in Dar Es Salaam / Tanzania; Geneva / Switzerland; Vienna / Austria; Puebla / Mexico and Bogotá / Colombia. It was also discussed at local meetings, such as in São Paulo / SP, São José do Rio Preto / SP, Diadema / SP, Mossoró / RN, Poços de Caldas / SC and Felipe Guerra / RN. It was also presented at national meetings and seminars, such as the national meeting in Brasília and the national seminar in Rio de Janeiro / RJ and another one held in Recife / PE; in international seminars held in Salvador / BA, Campinas / SP and Florianópolis / SC. And more recently, via webinar¹², organised by the international network *Family for Every Child*¹³.

¹⁰ SAFE FAMILIES, SAFE CHILDREN - **Safe Families, Safe Children - Quebrando o ciclo de violência – construindo um futuro para os mais marginalizados**. JUCONI, Mexico, 2013. Available at: <http://www.acerbrasil.org.br/arquivos/publicacoes/AssistenciaSocial/livros/SafeFT.pdf>

¹¹ BADEN, Morgan. **Finding the Way Home**. Lumos/Scholastic, Nova Iorque, 2019. ISBN 978-1-338-19344-2.

¹² Accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yumhGi_2ksE&feature=youtu.be

¹³ For further information: <https://www.familyforeverychild.org/>

6. Description of the Programme delivered in Diadema/SP.

6.1. Operational characteristics.

Over the period from 2009 to 2019 the format of the Family Guardian Programme was adjusted. The most recent parameters used in replications in Santo André / SP and Felipe Guerra / RN will be presented below.

The Family Guardian Programme supported the extended families of children and adolescents without parental care - and who were in the process of reintegration into their extended families through judicial guardianship. The reintegration process took place through supported guardianship, that is, a financial grant¹⁴ was offered in addition to professional support to strengthen family and community bonds.

Its objective was to guarantee the protection of children and adolescents without parental care, providing a safe family environment for their integral development. In search of alternatives to institutional care, ACER Brasil created a methodology of support, monitoring and guidance for the extended and socio-affective families of children and adolescents aged 0 to 18. The public included groups of brothers and children with disabilities, whose rights were seriously violated being removed from parental care by the courts, requiring the granting of guardianship for their reintegration into the extended and socio-affective family.

Other criteria evaluated for the family's entry into the programme were:

- Conditions for the extended family to protect the child;
- The intention of helping the mother or father, on the part of the guardian and his/her family; however, this help to parents could not be stronger than taking care of the child. For, when this happens, the child leaves the focus of the guardian, impairing both his protective capacity and adherence to the activities of the Programme;
- Pre-existing emotional bond between the child and the guardian.

The programme was run on weekdays and weekends. And the duration of the interventions varied: the activities in groups had a predefined duration of 1 hour. However, the conversations with each family held in the institution's spaces or during home visits, had a different duration, determined by the needs of the families or strategies created. Referrals, assistance and follow-up for each family were made by a key worker, and they stayed in the programme, on average, for two and a half years. The graduation of the family from the Family Guardian Programme was defined by the guardian's ability to protect their children and adolescents; if a teenager turned 18, or if the family moved to another city.

The monthly meetings with the group of guardians took place in the rooms of Municipal Cultural Centres, provided by the Secretariat of Culture, through formal authorisations with previously scheduled dates. The guardians residing in the Eldorado region met at the ACER Brasil community centre.

¹⁴ The value of half a minimum wage when the child entered the programme and the monetary equivalent of a standard food basket every subsequent month.

The human resources team was composed of: 1 coordinator, 1 administrative assistant and 4 professional key workers, for a target of 120 children / adolescents under guardianship. The work was developed by a multiprofessional team, with university education (psychologists and social workers) and/or complete high school - which favours a wide range of directions and action strategies. It is important to reinforce the existence of a large investment in continuous training of the multiprofessional team. In addition to encouraging participation in events (counting as hours worked), the team met weekly to discuss cases, plan and monitor cases. Monthly training sessions were held with themes chosen from the cases attended. Always looking to expand the repertoire, content from different fields was discussed: socio-legal, health, education, neuropsychology, etc.

In order to minimize the impact on the household budget of guardian families, a grant was offered, provided that the guardianship of the child or adolescent was already granted by the judiciary. Another condition was the use of the resource to meet the needs of children and adolescents. The socioeconomic status of the family was not a criterion for receiving it and no specific registration or control of the use of the money by the professional or the institution was made. When the guardian or professional identified any need for financial guidance, it was included in the family care plan. It is worth mentioning that the guardian was able to count on the support of ACER Brasil's financial sector for support on opening a bank account and financial control. In addition to the monthly allowance, when the child arrived at his new home, a larger amount was offered, for example for structuring and adapting the physical space.

Families entered the programme in different ways. In the case of the child or adolescent admitted from being in institutional care, the team of this care home identified the extended family capable of receiving guardianship of the child without parental care and, in possession of the guardianship papers, was sent for inclusion in the Family Guardian Programme.

When the child or adolescent without parental care or in a situation of violence was identified by the Tutelary Council, by other governmental or non-governmental programmes and services, they were referred to CREAS (specialised social welfare centre) and attended first by the Protection and Specialized Care Service for Families and Individuals / PAEFI. When this team evaluated the placement of the child in an extended or socio-affective family as the best child protection strategy, it identified a member to receive guardianship. It was still up to this team to accompany and assist the parents.

It is worth mentioning that, in cases where the child or adolescent without parental care was already under the care of their extended or socio-affective family, but the guardianship was not formalized, ACER Brasil supported the family in filing the judicial request for guardianship. Such cases require studies on how to include the extended family in the Family Guardian Programme, at the time of opening the judicial process.

Even with care provided at the institution, the family remained referenced at CREAS, therefore, its specialized team monitored the measures taken and monitored the results achieved. This monitoring was carried out through two monthly meetings: one for technical cooperation and the other for counter-referral. In the technical cooperation meetings, issues related to the technical partnership and monitoring methodology were addressed. At the counter-referral meetings, with the presence of the members of the service network of the various services and the rights guarantee

system, articulations of the service network were made and the case discussions that led to referrals to services in other sectors (like health and education), or the decision to place a child in an institution, for example. CREAS was responsible for taking the minutes and producing the family care planning report prepared by the service network, with actions foreseen for Social Assistance, Health, Education and other services, in addition to the Tutelary Council, the Public Prosecutor's office and others of the Rights Guarantee System. In the municipality of Felipe Guerra / RN, as there is no CREAS, CRAS (basic social welfare centre) makes the referrals for families and supervises the programme.

As for leaving the Programme, first, the key worker assessed the achievement of the goals with the guardian. Subsequently, the case was discussed with the coordination of ACER Brasil and then at the Meeting of the Service Network and at CREAS. At that moment, the necessary referrals for the service network were defined, for example, Service for Strengthening Family and Community Bonds or other programmes of CRAS or CREAS; they were also sent to programmes and services in other areas. All needs and referrals were mapped by the professional together with the guardian and organised in a family plan. After termination, for 3 to 6 months the family was accompanied by the key worker, through phone calls or monthly visits.

6.2. Methodological characteristics.

The methodological basis of the Family Guardian Programme is the strengthening of extended or socio-affective families, by repairing the damage caused by violence and reinforcing or restoring the feeling of belonging and identification among family members. At the same time, the case worker facilitates the exercise of care and protection by adults, especially in the case of the legal guardian determined by the courts.

When the family is referred by CREAS, before starting care, the first step is the initial diagnosis and verification of the presence of some aspects that favour a family to be a guardian (for example, the ability to protect, care and bond); and those that are negative (such as financial interest, ambiguity between child and parent care; affective unavailability). Positive points must also be identified for a child or adolescent to be placed in an extended or socio-affective family (for example, the ability to bond, the participation of children in decisions, for example, she chooses who she would like to stay with, sibling maintenance in the same family) and unfavourable (mainly many placements). In this initial stage, a survey is made of some behaviours of the parents that favour the recovery of custody of children or adolescents by the parents (such as resilience, awareness of the process that culminated in the suspension of family rights, connection with the guardians), or unfavourable (for example, violence, lack of treatment for drug addiction, difficulty in bonding). These points should be revisited throughout the work with the families.

With the intervention started, the following strategies are implemented: i) elaboration of a diagnosis to know the history of the rights violations in which the child was inserted, as well as transgenerational patterns of intrafamily violations and abuse. For this, instruments such as a social network map, historical genogram and family genogram are used; ii) creation, monitoring and semiannual monitoring of action plans, with clear and agreed aims with each family during home visits; iii) formation of multifamily groups, periodic meetings of guardians to establish a support network composed of peers; iv) offer of financial grant and; v) trips.

The main strategic action is to create a bond of trust between the case worker, the guardian, the children or adolescents and the other adults who are part of the circle of relationships of the child and the adolescent without parental care. One of the premises that supports the work is that, with the support of case workers, extended families and guardians can experience feelings of belonging, protection and security, essential for the promotion of mental health and human development and, through this experience can expand their child's care and protection repertoire. A second one is about the preservation of the affective bonds (family and community) of the child or adolescent to ensure stability in their life and thus, reduce the damage caused by the traumas of separation from the parents or of experienced violence.

6.3. Legal and conceptual frameworks.

Three main principals govern the creation of a safe and affectionate family environment by the Family Guardian Programme:

6.3.1. Best interest of the child.

In the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children and adolescents become subjects of law, not only subject to the wishes and needs of the family. This understanding, also present in the Brazilian Constitution and in the Child and Adolescent Statute - ECA, delimits family power in the best interests of children and adolescents. Thus, one should prefer the situation in which they are most protected and with their development guaranteed, so that they live with freedom and dignity. The benefits for its development must be at the heart of “all actions [...] carried out by public or private social welfare institutions, courts, administrative authorities or legislative bodies” (BRASIL, 1990b).

6.3.2. Staying in the family.

Family and community living is seen as a right in several legal documents, as it is understood that the family and the community are essential for protection and integral development. It is through the affection of social and family ties - mainly by the feeling of belonging, protection and security - that the constitution of identity and meaning for human existence takes place. Shared affections form the social web that protects and develops the human being. Therefore, those constituted by bonds of affection or solidarity are also recognised as family.

The ECA determines not only that children and adolescents are brought up in their family, but also imposes the preference of maintaining or reintegrating them into the family (BRASIL, 1990a, art. 19). ACER Brasil, and the other members of the Safe Families, Safe Children (SFSC) coalition, when sharing social work practices with families in an intergenerational cycle of violence, exclusion and poverty, concluded that children and adolescents who experience helplessness, betrayal and abandonment can suffer traumas in their development. To avoid or repair them, an effort is required so that they are cared for and protected in a familiar family and community space. From the experience of the SFSC coalition, the most effective strategy is to offer professional support for the family to overcome the intergenerational cycle of violence, poverty and exclusion by restoring ties of belonging. According to research by psychiatrist Bruce Perry (2009), children with stable, positive and healthy family relationships improve their mental health condition. Those who experience various changes in the family, school and community environment and chaotic and unpredictable relationships do not improve even when treated using different therapeutic models.

6.3.3. Strengthening the family's protective capacity.

The Constitution states that it is the duty of the family, the State and society to protect and care for citizens (Article 227) and to create means to curb violence in family relationships (Article 226).

ACER Brasil is guided by the national social welfare policy, which promotes access to rights and social protection through welcoming, income and community and family life. In conjunction with other social policies, it centralises its activities in families, in order to prevent risks and social vulnerability and repair damage caused by exclusion, violence and / or the violation of rights.

In search of explanation of the phenomena and reflection on methodological approaches, the team of professionals is guided by the experiences shared with and by international research and discussion groups, such as the Safe Families, Safe Children Coalition and Family Reintegration. In addition, concepts and knowledge from other theorists are used, for example: Regina Miotto and Jane Valente, especially in discussions about social work with family; Leonardo Boff, in the discussions about love and care; Soussumi, and his concept of memory recording; Bowlby, on the importance of affection; from anthropology, Clifford Geertz and Malinowski influence the way of working with the family.

7. Research methodology.

After ten years delivering the Family Guardian Programme, ACER Brasil realised that there was a need to invest in measuring the results of its programme, in the lives of children and adolescents and their guardian families.

This is an evaluation done by many hands. Its purpose and methodology were devised by Jonathan Hannay and under his supervision, the team of professionals from the Family Guardian Programme carried out data collection. Still under the supervision of Jonathan Hannay, the data was organised and tabulated together with Valter Driusso. Later, together with Veruska Galdini and Kelly Lima, the data was analyzed, discussed and written up.

Data collection was carried out through structured questionnaires, applied by a temporary-hired staff member, through telephone calls or home visits previously scheduled, in the period between October and December 2019.

The families contacted to respond to the survey were those who participated in the programme in the period from December 2009 until December 31, 2018. 93 guardians¹⁵ of children and adolescents removed from parental care by court order were interviewed and answered the questionnaires.

24 guardians and their families could not be located because their phone numbers were out of date or they had changed their home address. As a result, the research universe is composed of data from 171 children and adolescents, 93 family guardians and 106 legal guardians - in 13 families the custody was shared by the couple.

¹⁵ During this period, a total of 117 families bringing up 243 children and adolescents were part of the programme in the period from 2009 to 2019.

8. Results.

The results of the research into the characteristics of the public served by the Family Guardian Programme, between 2009 and 2019, are presented below, for example, length of time spent with the extended family and in the programme, ages of children and adolescents, guardianship of a group of siblings; aspects related to guardians (their gender, age, relationship to the child or adolescent, for example); about the histories of the children and adolescents being accompanied (such as reasons for the removal from the parents, with whom they lived before the guardian) and the changes that occurred in the life of the child or adolescent after the determination of their guardianship to the extended / socio-affective family (related to education, training, work, income, maternity and paternity).

8.1. Age of the children and adolescents¹⁶.

The ages on entering the programme varied from newborns to 17 year olds, distributed as shown in Figure 1, below:

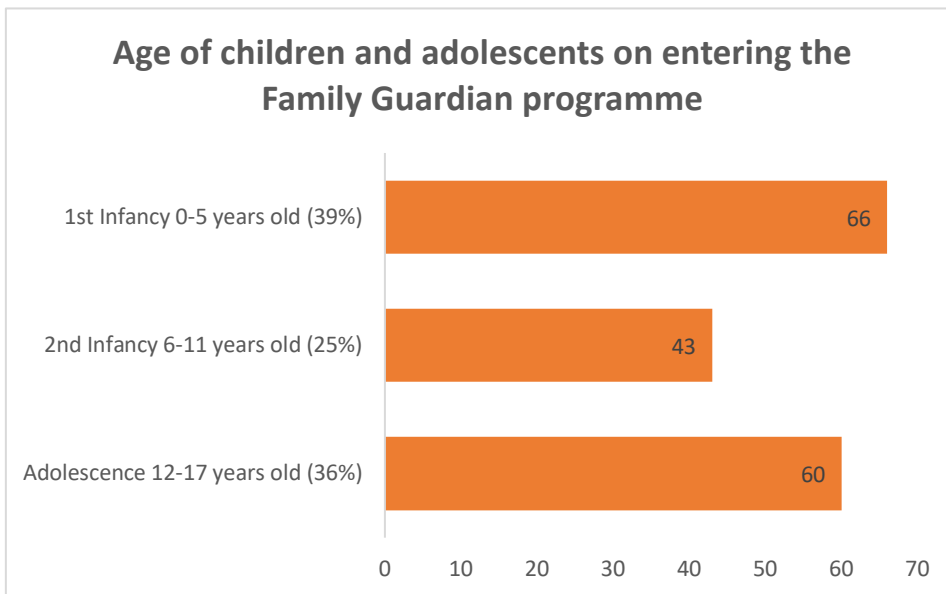


Figure 1

As can be seen above, in figure 1, the majority (39%) of children were in the 1st infancy. The breakdown by age group in the first and second infancies is shown in figure 2, below:

¹⁶ In Brazil ages and phases in childhood are defined in law and all public policy and programmes follow these definitions. First Infancy is 0-5 years old with the First Infancy being from 0-2 years old, Second Infancy is 6-11 and Adolescence from 12-17 (*Translator*).

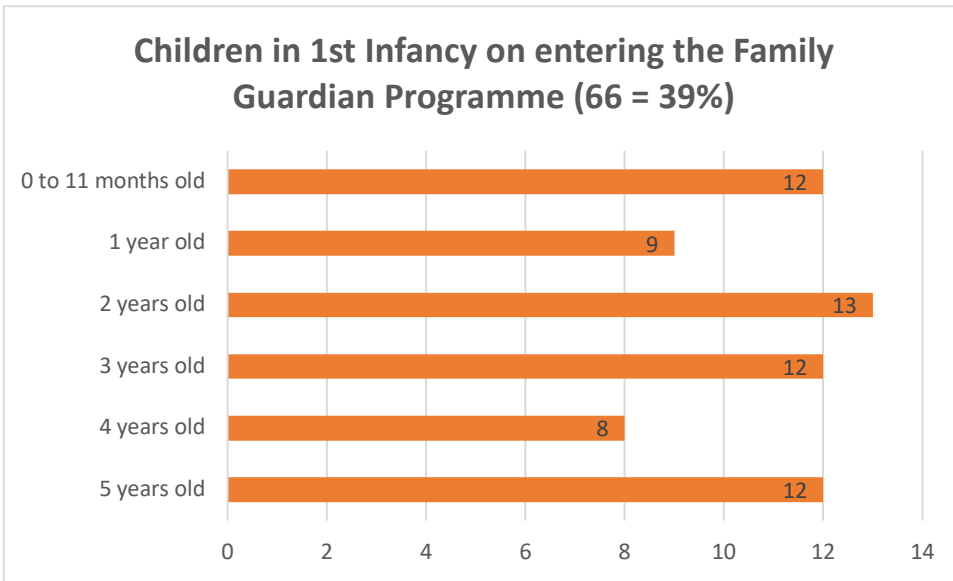


Figure 2

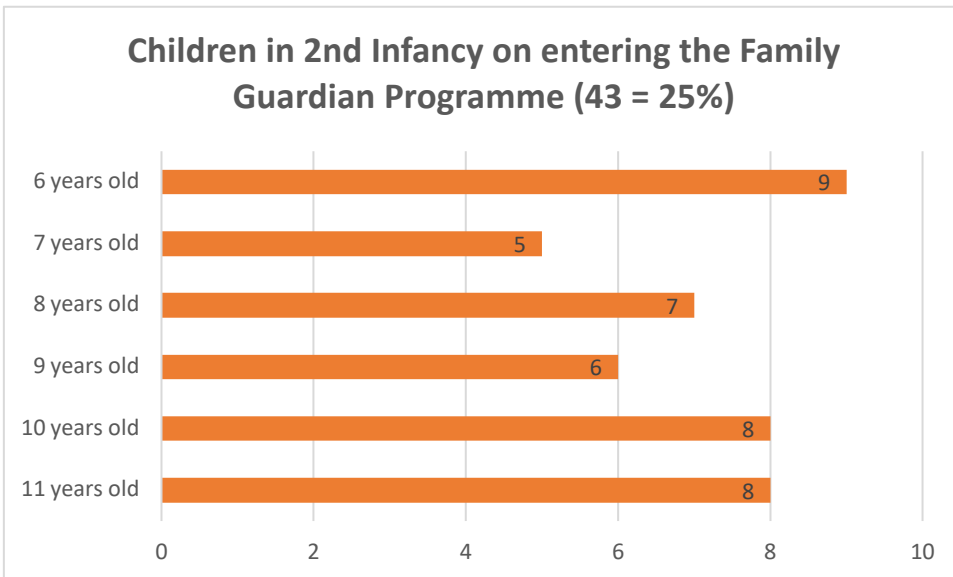


Figure 3

Second, with 36% of the population, are adolescents (12 to 17 years old). Of them, 28% were 13 years old and 26% were 15 years old. Other numbers are shown in the graph below:

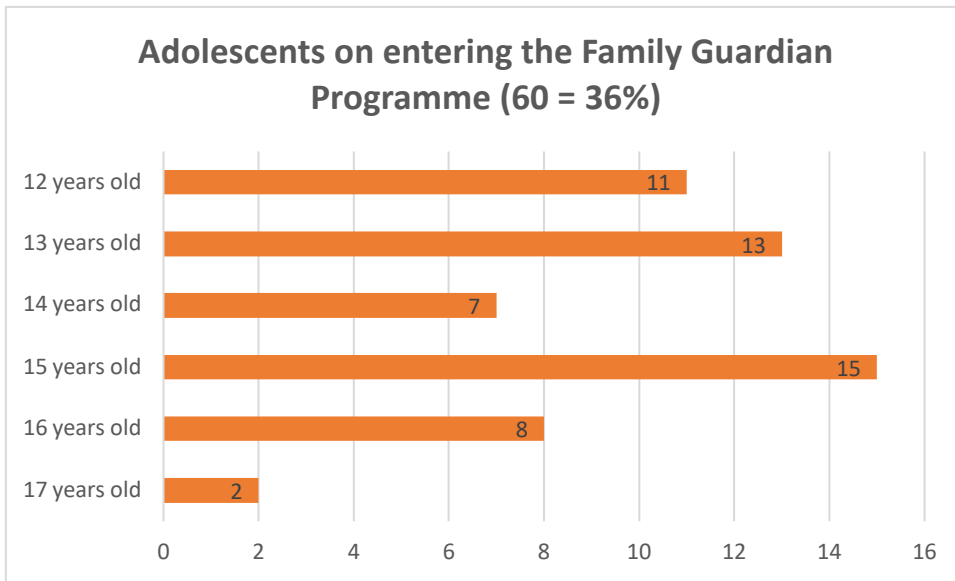


Figure 4

8.2. Length of time spent in the Family Guardian programme.

The minimum length of time foreseen for staying in the programme is 6 months. But with regard to the maximum time forecast, there was a change during the execution of the programme. From 2009 to 2011, 36 months were planned, and from 2012 it was reduced to 30 months (2 and a half years) - as a result of our experience and also of the discussions with other specialists in assisting families and children in situations of serious rights violations such as violence, in the meetings of the Safe Families, Safe Children coalition¹⁷.

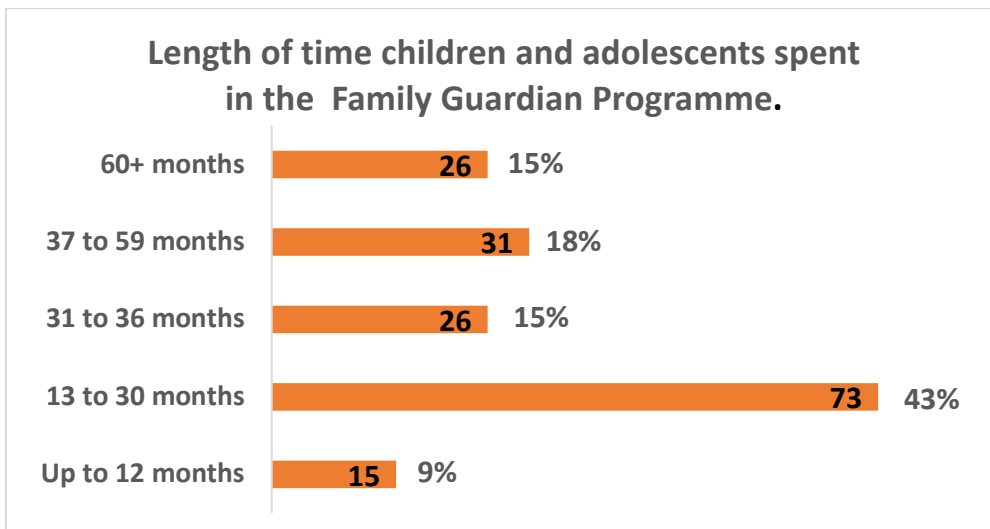


Figure 5

¹⁷SAFE FAMILIES, SAFE CHILDREN - Safe Families, Safe Children - Quebrando o ciclo de violência – construindo um futuro para os mais marginalizados. JUCONI, México, 2013.

The numbers show that throughout the period of delivering the Family Guardian Programme, between 2009 and 2019, with the maturation of the methodology and the understanding of the expected results, the ideal length of stay in the programme was reduced to 30 months and limited to 36.

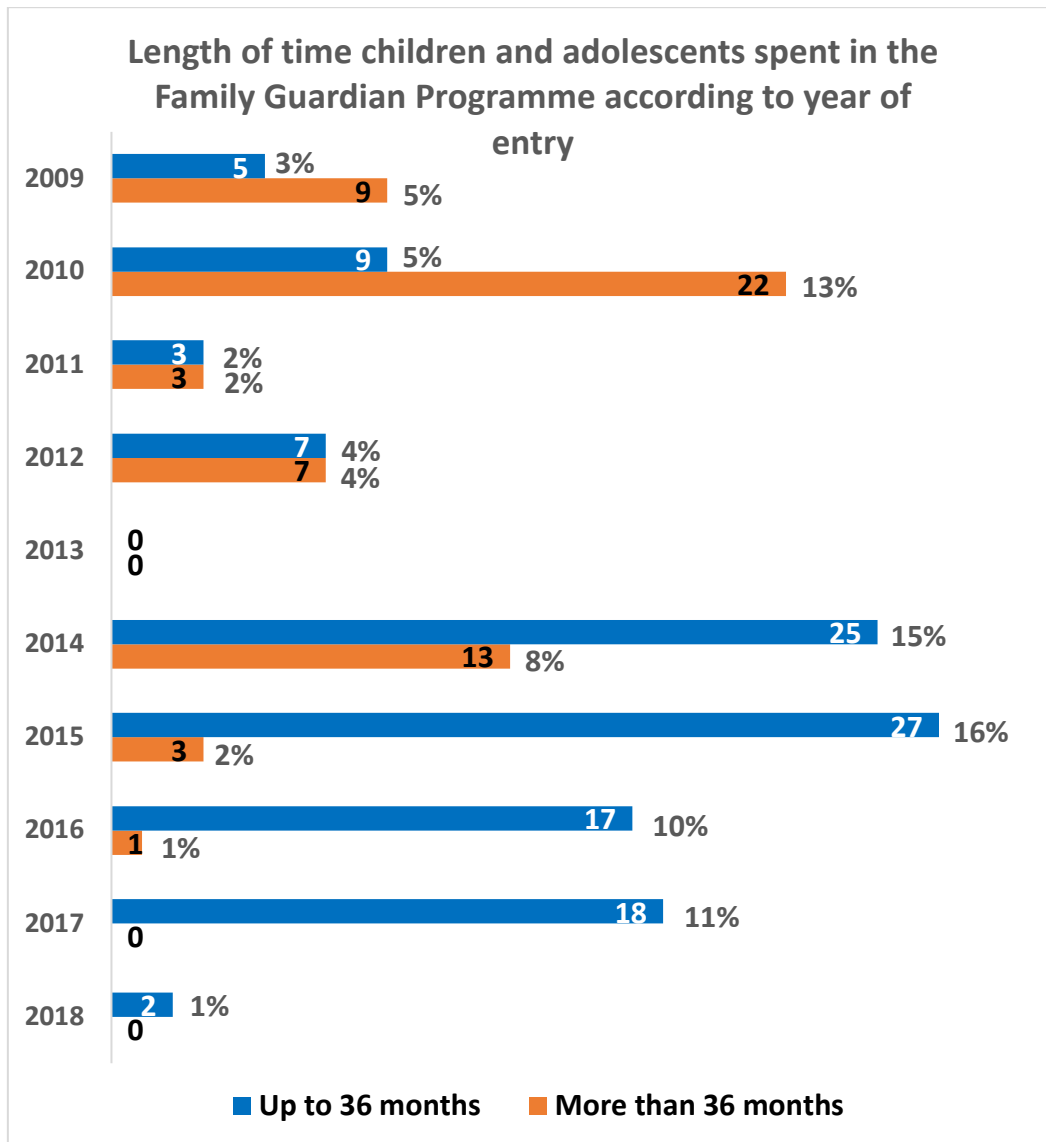


Figure 6

8.3. Prior to being placed with kin.

Before being under the judicially determined guardianship of a member of their extended or socio-affective family, the 171 children and adolescents surveyed lived with their parents or in institutional care or with another family member. It is worth noting that in only one case the child was in the hospital, before living with the guardian family.

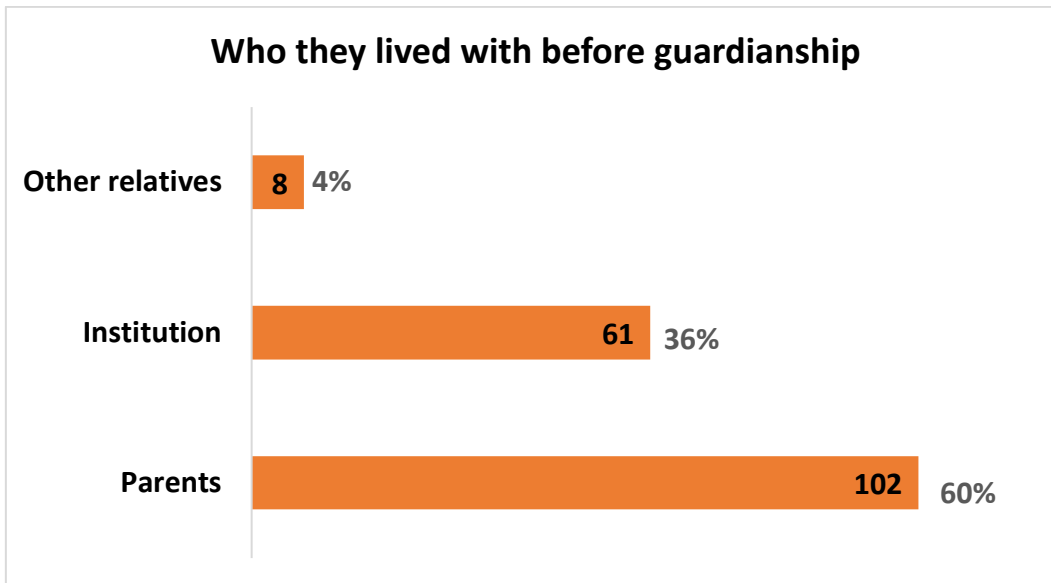


Figure 7

8.4. Reason for being removed from parental care.

The main reasons for being removed from parental care pointed out in the research by the guardians - according to their own understanding and not those assessed by a social worker or consulting the legal case - were negligence, abandonment, psychological violence and drug addiction.

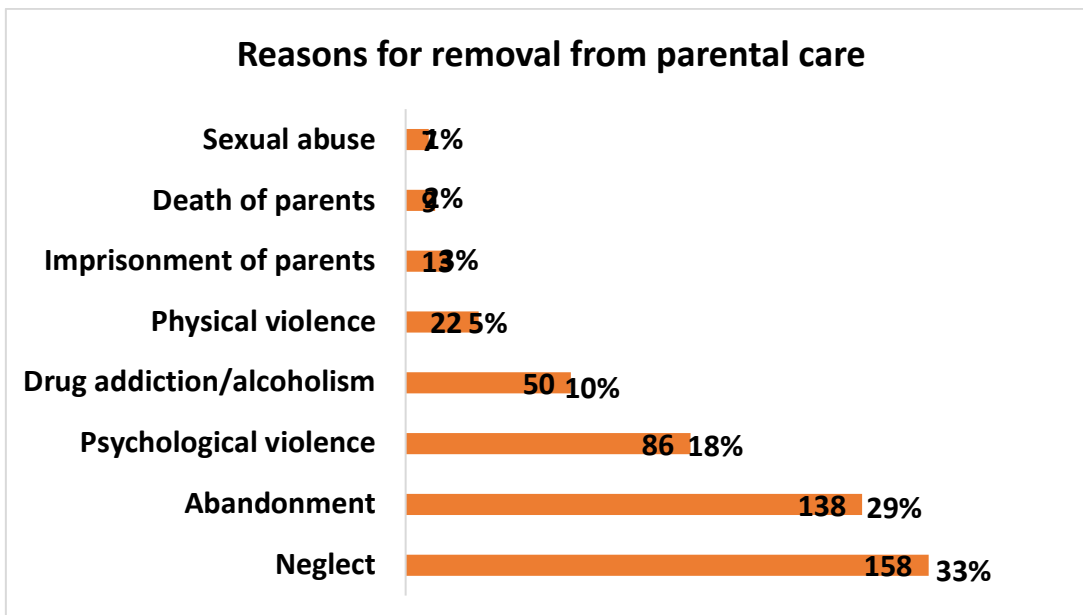


Figure 08

The respondents' responses also show that during the participation in the Family Guardian Programme, there was only one case of violence registered against the child, which may signal that this programme has achieved its objective of promoting a safe environment for children and adolescents.

8.5. The guardians.

As shown in the graph below, of the 171 children and adolescents in the scope of this research, most were under the care of biological grandparents. Then, the aunts and uncles are the most frequent guardians, followed by siblings and socio-affective relationships.

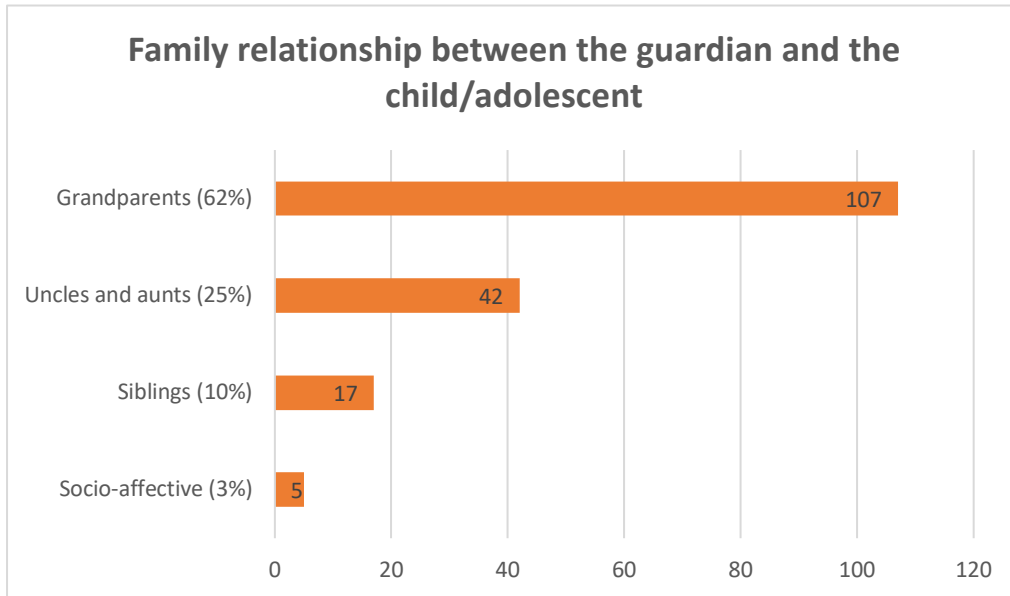


Figure 9

Out of 106 guardians, a total of 86 were female and 20 were male. Regarding guardianship, there are 93 guardian families, in which 78% (73) had a female guardian, 8% (7) had a male guardian and 14% (13) had a male and female couple as guardians.

Regarding the age of the guardians, when they received the child(ren) and adolescent(s), most of them were aged between 30 and 59 years old, both female and male; 21% of the female sex was in old age and 20% of the male sex was in this age group. The distribution by age group can be seen in the graph below.

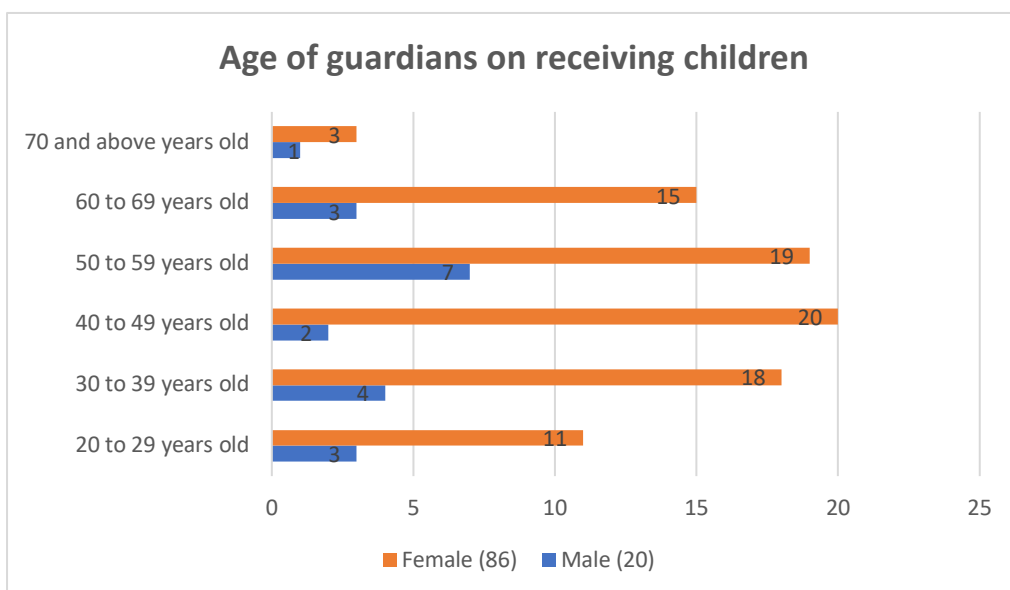


Figure 10

8.6. Groups of siblings.

The survey includes data on 171 children and adolescents and 93 guardian families, as groups of siblings were received by them.

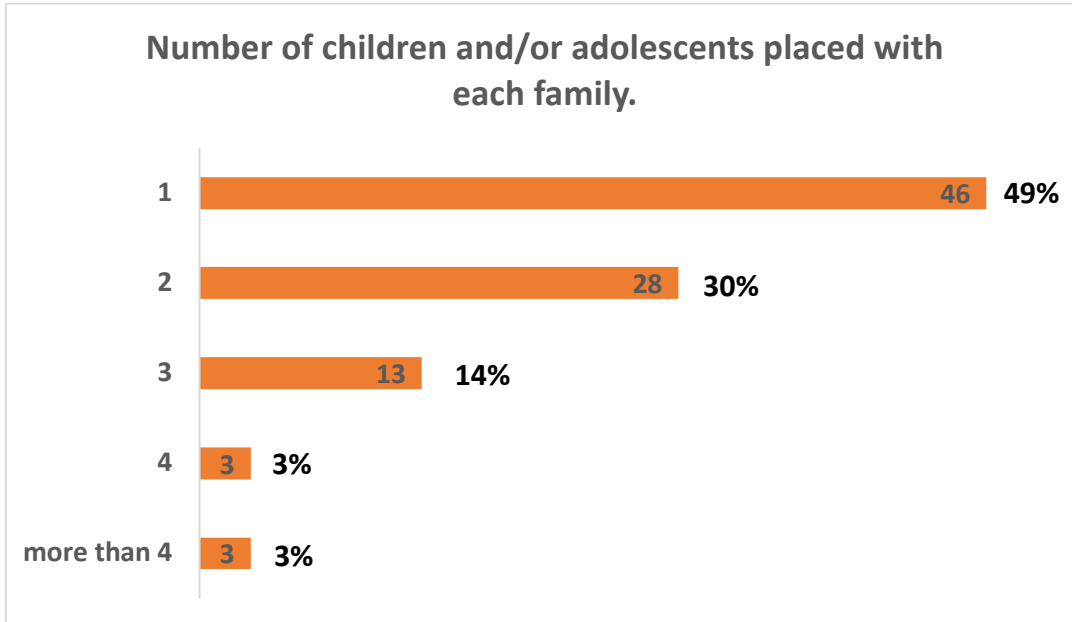


Figure 11

The occurrence of multiple placement is shown in the graphic above, where it reads that:

- 46 guardian families welcomed 1 child or adolescent;
- 28 guardian families welcomed 2 children or adolescents;
- 13 guardian families welcomed 3 children or adolescents;
- 03 guardian families welcomed 4 children or adolescents;
- 03 guardian families welcomed more than 04 children or adolescents.

8.7. Continuing to live with the guardian family.

At the time of the survey, of the 171 children and adolescents, 70% (120) continued to live with their first guardians. Of this group, 47% (56) are female and 53% (64) are male.

As can be seen in the graph below, 75.7% of children and adolescents continued to live with their grandparents. Of those who lived with their uncles, 64.28% remained under their guardianship; and those who lived with their siblings, 51% continued to live with them.

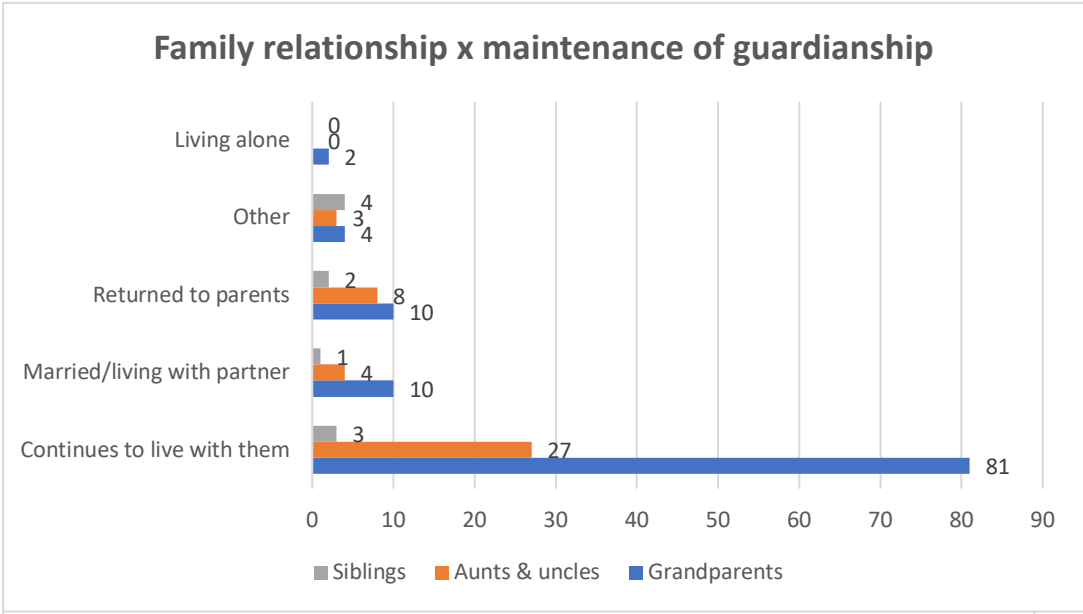


Figure 12

Most of those aged 18 or over (56), at the time of the survey, continue to live with their extended family (25) or are married (20). Five of them live with their parents and four live alone. One person over the age of 18 is in prison and another was in the Cruz Verde Association hospital¹⁸.

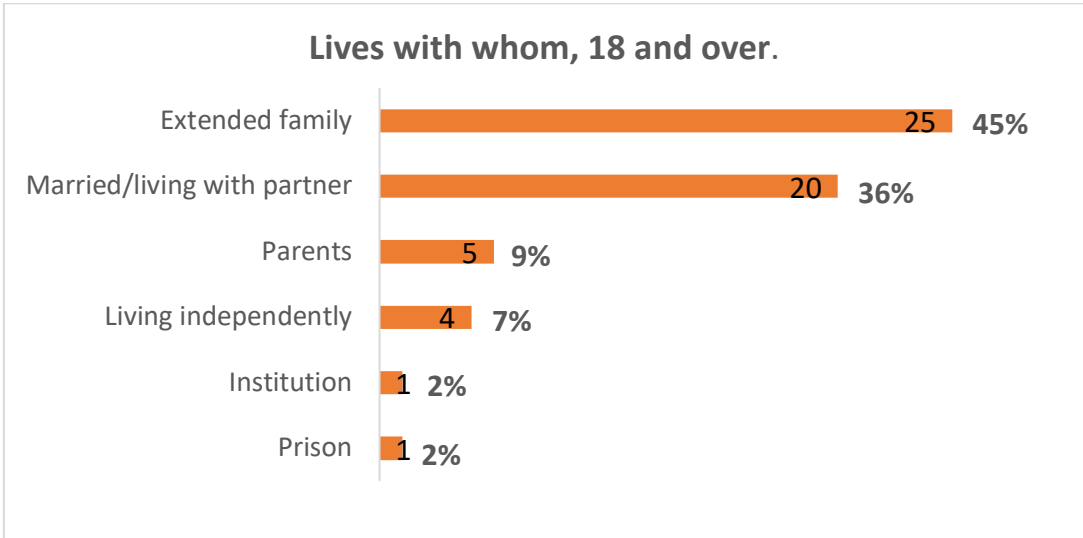


Figure 13

8.8. Those who left the guardian family before the age of 18.

Of the total of 41 children and adolescents who stopped living with the guardian family before turning 18, 59% (24) were aged between 12 and 17 years old and 41% (17) were children aged between 2 and 11 years old.

Figure 14

¹⁸ This is a long term placement for teenagers and adults with multiple disabilities.

With regards to the children, 5 of them left the guardian's home because they went into institutional care (03 were three years old) and 12 children returned to live with their parents (01 two year old and the others in the age group from 06 to 10 years old) - as detailed in the graphs below.

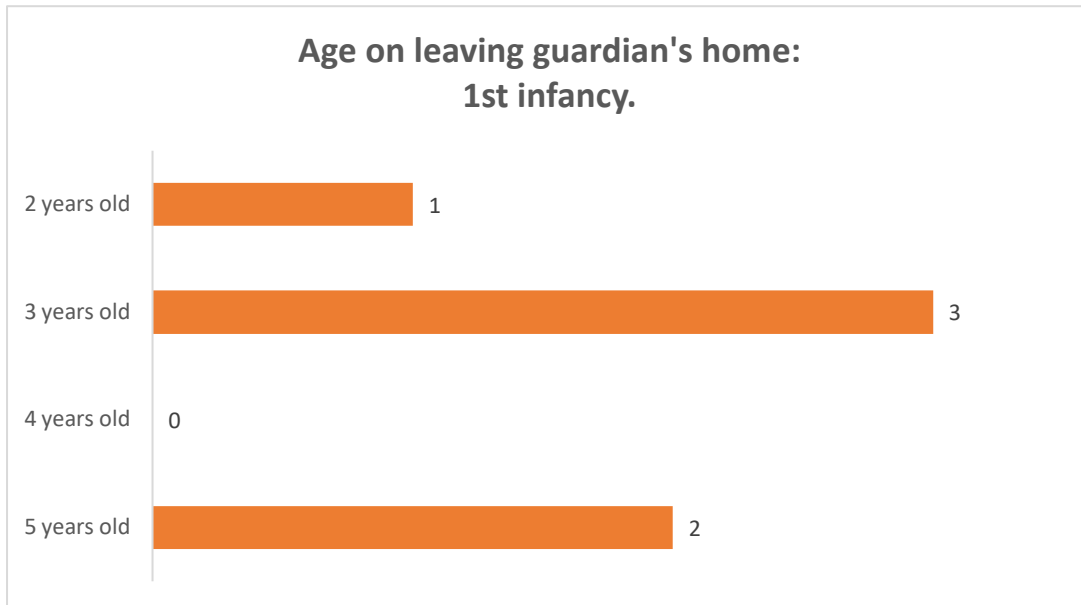


Figure 15

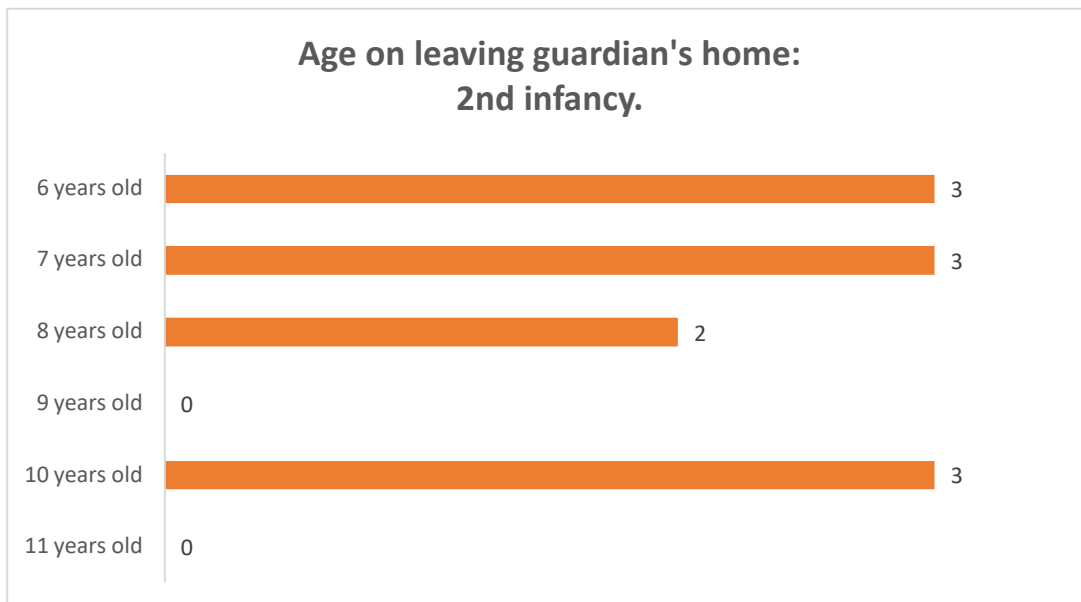


Figure 16

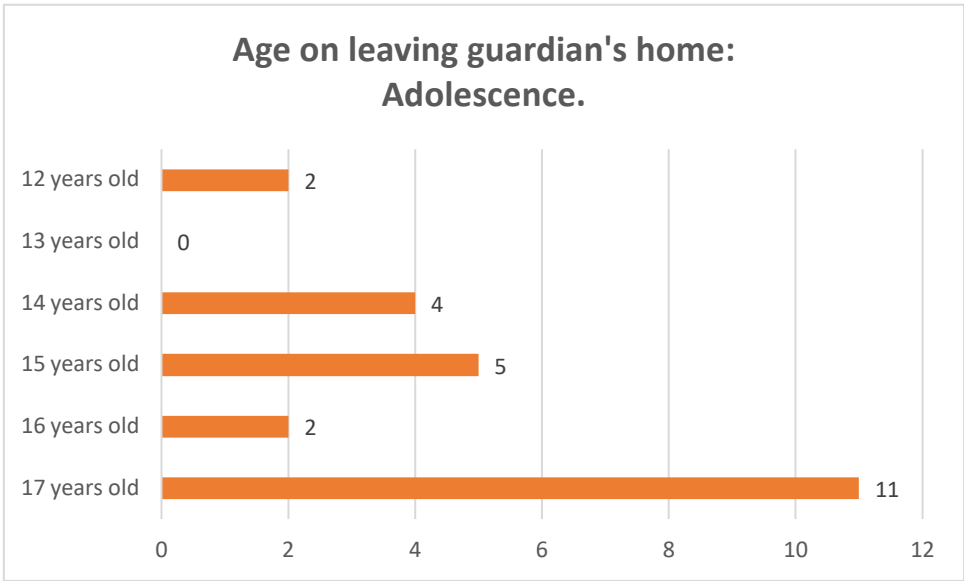


Figure 17

The reasons for leaving, indicated by the respondents were as follows:

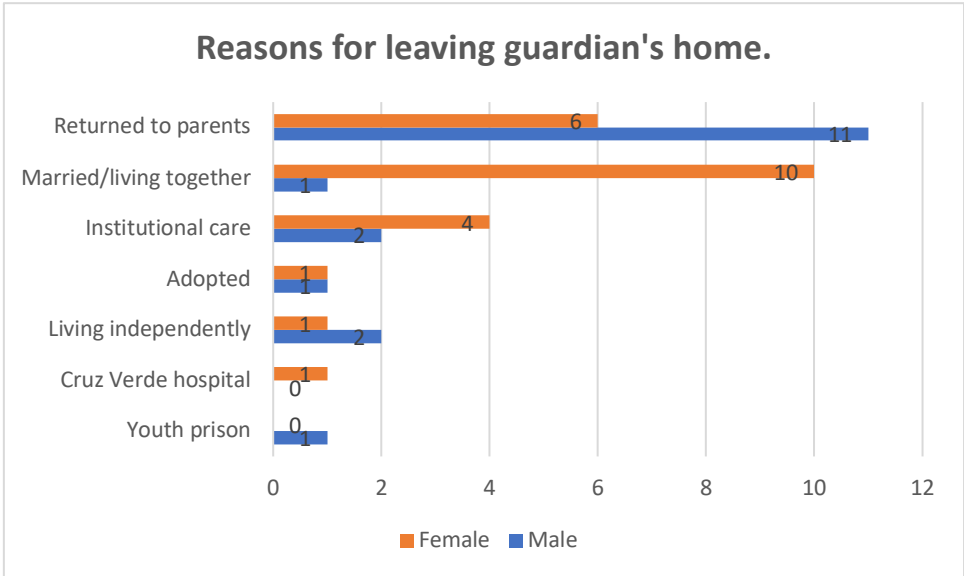


Figure 18

Of the 17 children or adolescents who returned to live with their parents, before living with their guardians, 06 had being living with them; 08 lived in institutions and 03 were living with another relative.

The length of time spent in the programme was as follows:

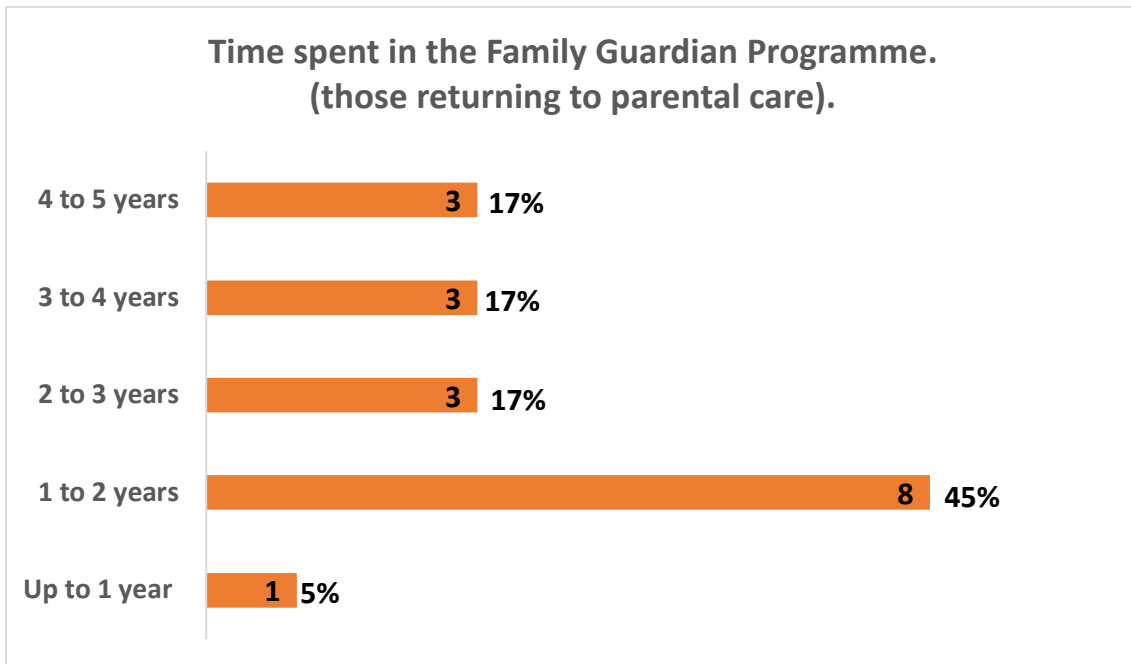


Figure 19

Of those who left the guardian's home because they got married or established a stable union, 9 were 17 years old; 1 was 15 and 1 was 16. It is worth mentioning that 9 were 18 years old or more.

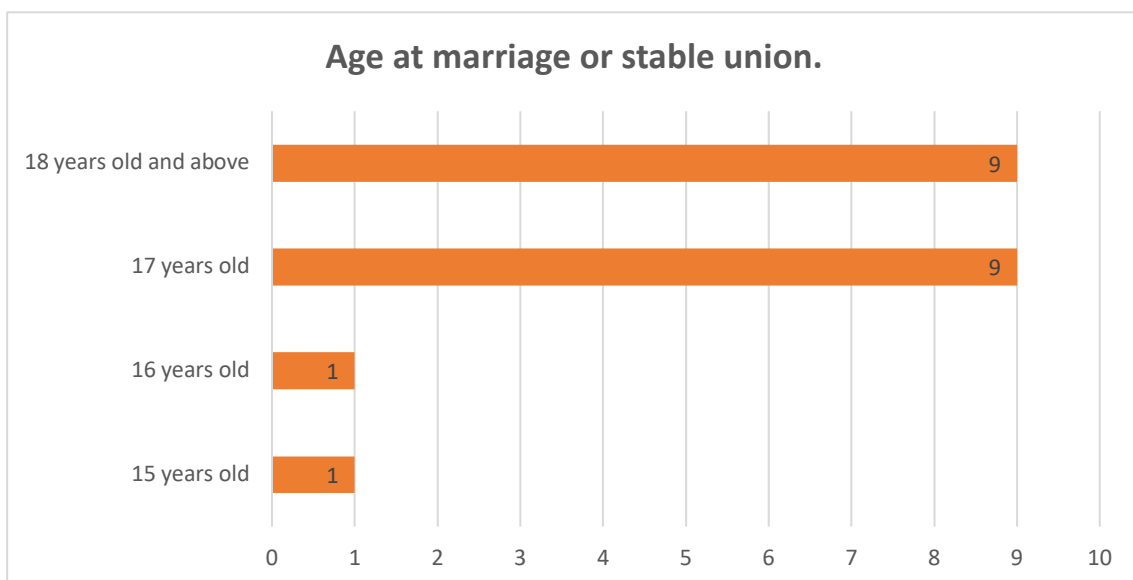


Figure 20

8.9. Education¹⁹ and training.

The question asked in the questionnaire was: what level of study did you conclude?

Of the total of 171 responses, those that are younger than the educational level were disregarded, for example: the age is 8 years old and the educational level is high school. Thus, we have a total of 151 valid replies.

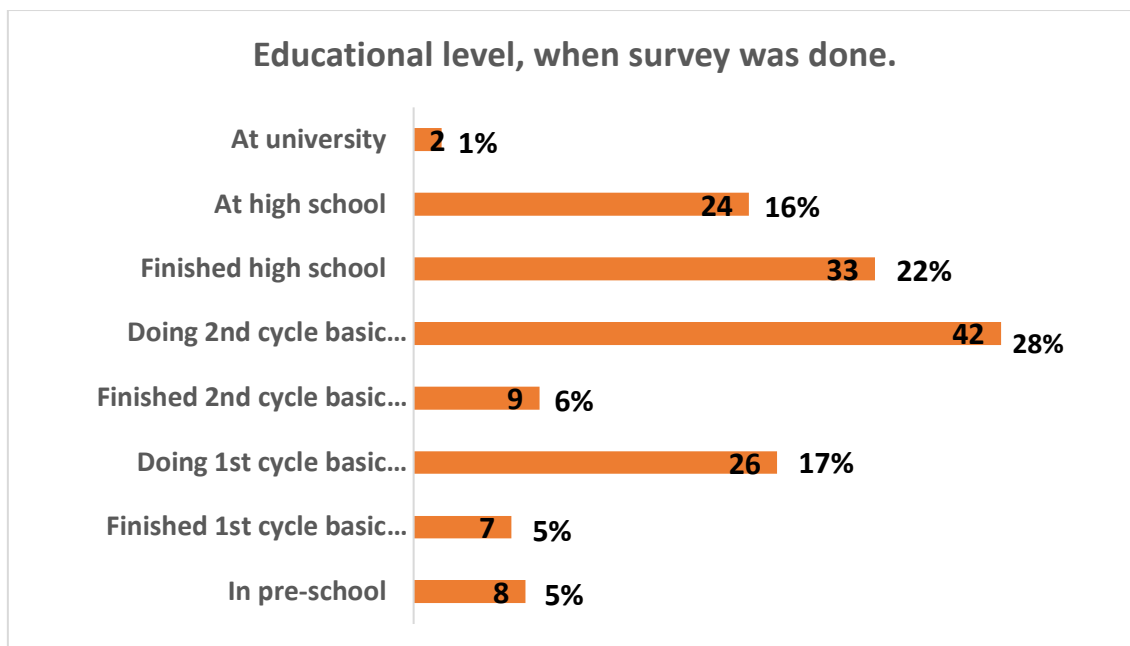


Figure 21

During tabulation of the data, some invalid records were identified. However, what can be observed is a tendency to be in the correct age-grade among children. Because, for children aged 6 to 10 years old all have the expected age-grade relationship, as of the 27 valid records, 21 are expected age-grade and 06 have completed basic cycle 1.

Regarding those aged 11 to 14 years, all have completed basic cycle 1 or have incomplete basic cycle 2, as expected for the age group. Two, out of 25 valid records, have completed basic cycle 1; 16 of them have an incomplete basic cycle 2 and 7 (all aged 14) have completed basic cycle 2 or incomplete high school.

Looking at the adolescents aged between 15 and 17 years old, of the 21 valid answers, 76% (16) have incomplete high school or basic cycle 2, and 24% (5) have incomplete high school.

Of the 56 people who answered that they were 18 years old or more at the time of the survey, 31 had completed high school. And 12 have incomplete high school. Also reflecting the municipal data, women are more education than men considering high school, higher education genders are equivalent, there are only two people, a man and a woman.

¹⁹ In Brazil, education is obligatory from the age of 4 and is split into cycles which, together last 14 years. The first cycle, pre-school, lasts 2 years, followed by the first cycle of basic education lasting five years. Then comes the second basic cycle of 4 years when children get subject teachers and finally 3 years of high school. Most children in Brazilian state schools (and private to a slightly lesser extent) go to school in shifts – from 7am to 12.20pm; 1pm to 6.20pm and lastly 7pm to 11pm (*translator*).

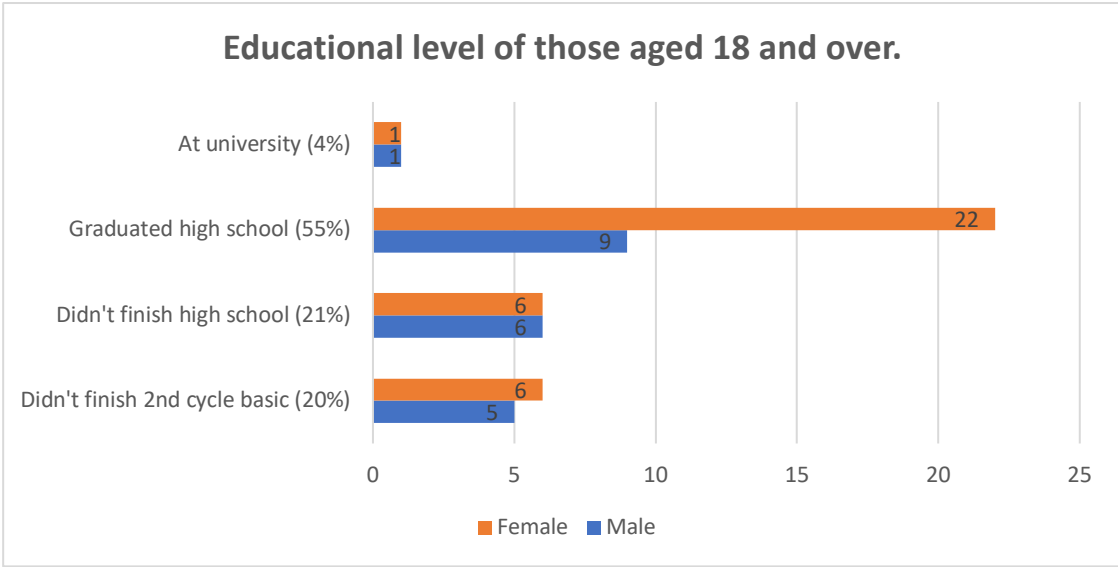


Figure 22

Regarding vocational courses, five young people (four of them women) declared that they had taken the following training courses: tourism technician, flight attendant, hairdresser, manicurist, young apprentice, administration technician, in addition to English at Cultura Inglesa, a language school.

8.10. Work and income.

Regarding work and income, 55 of the 93 families at the time of the survey do not receive any benefits or government cash transfers and neither did 40 of the 56 young people over 18 years old.

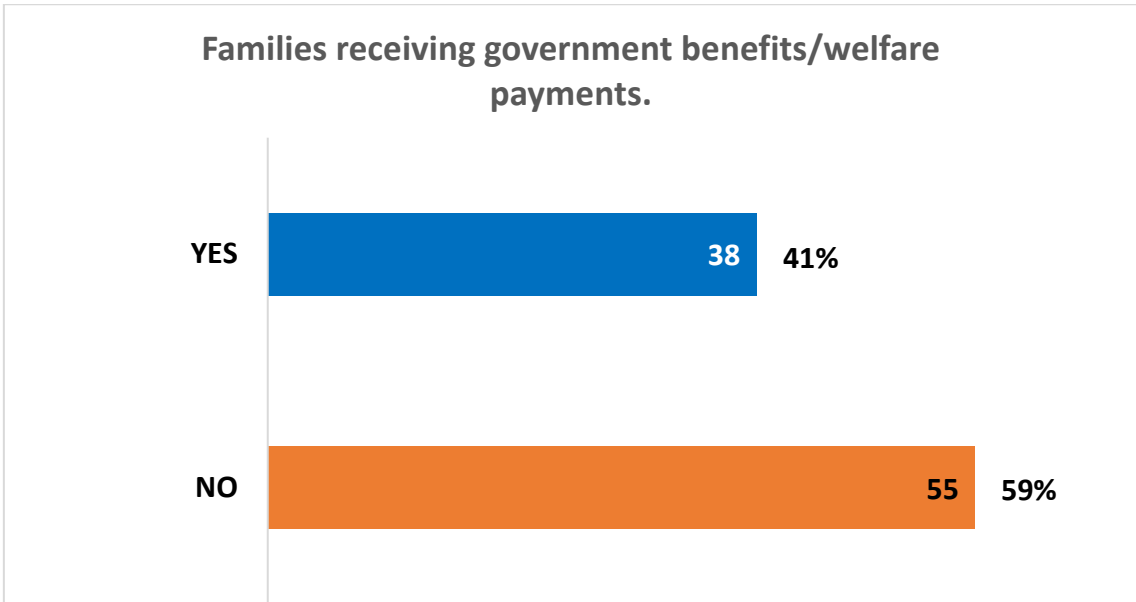


Figure 23

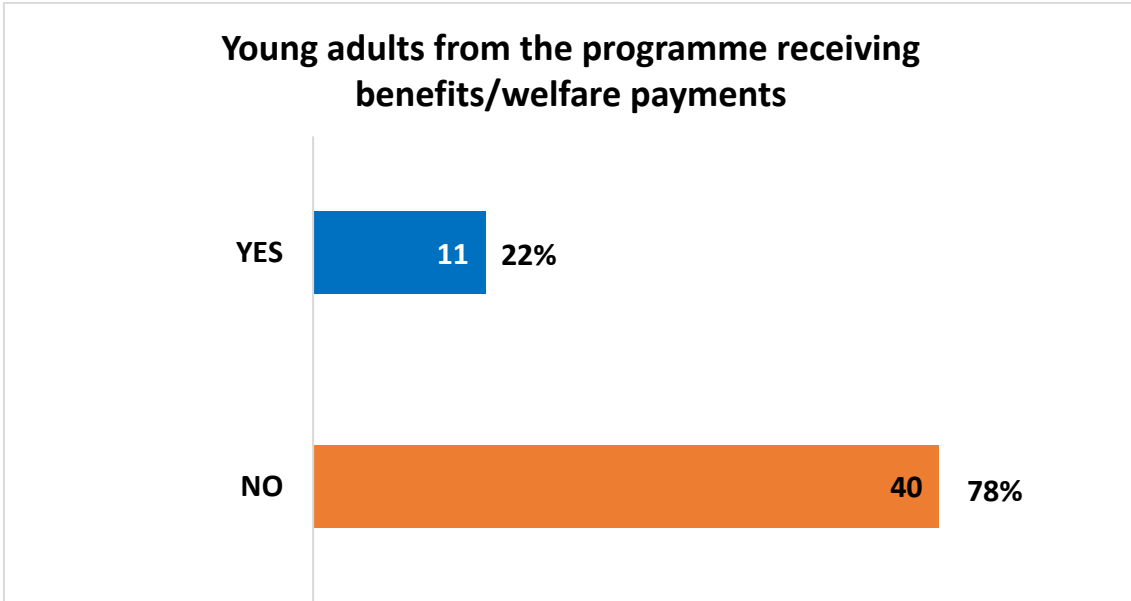


Figure 24

Of the 171 responses, 62 people in 38 families said they receive benefits or cash transfers. And the sources and programmes mentioned were: rent support, *Bolsa Familia*, disability pension (*BPC*) and transportation for the elderly.

Regarding work, 12 young people said they were working on the date of the survey. The activities mentioned were administrative assistant, clerk, hairdresser, waitress on an MSC cruise ship, car wash, manicure, mechanic, pamphlet distributor. And 19 responded that they had already worked one day - of these, 08 are women and 11 are men.

The age of the first job for the majority was between 17 and 18 years old, as we can see in the graph below:

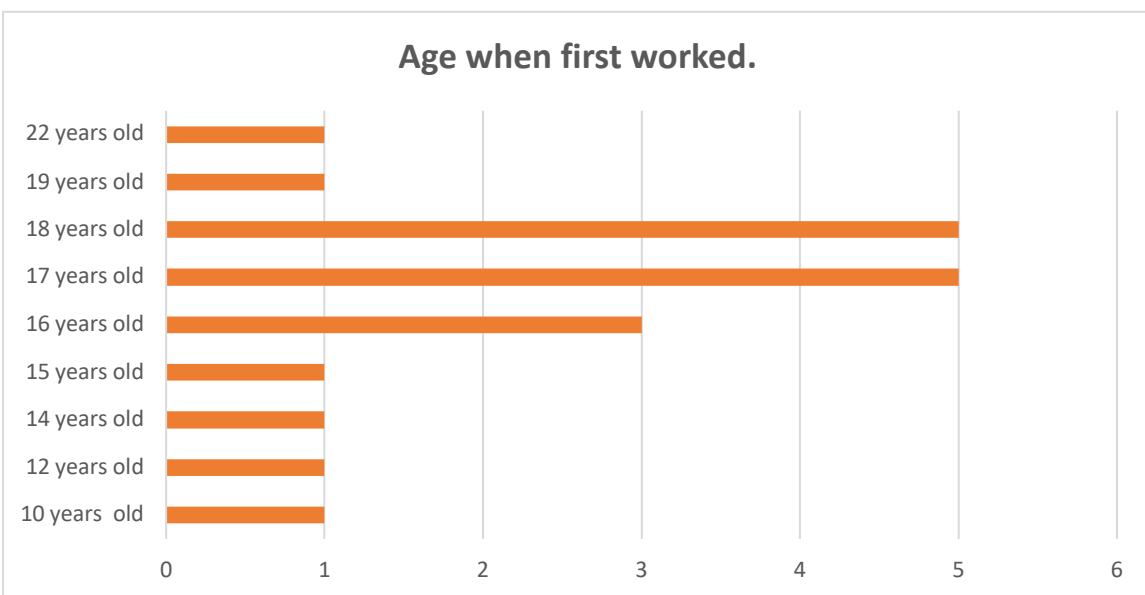


Figure 25

8.11. Maternity and paternity.

19 respondents said they had children, 17 women and 2 men. 26.31% of them became pregnant the first time at 17 years old; 21.5% became pregnant at 18 and 15.78% at 16. A girl who became pregnant at the age of 14, currently has three children; the others have up to 2 children.

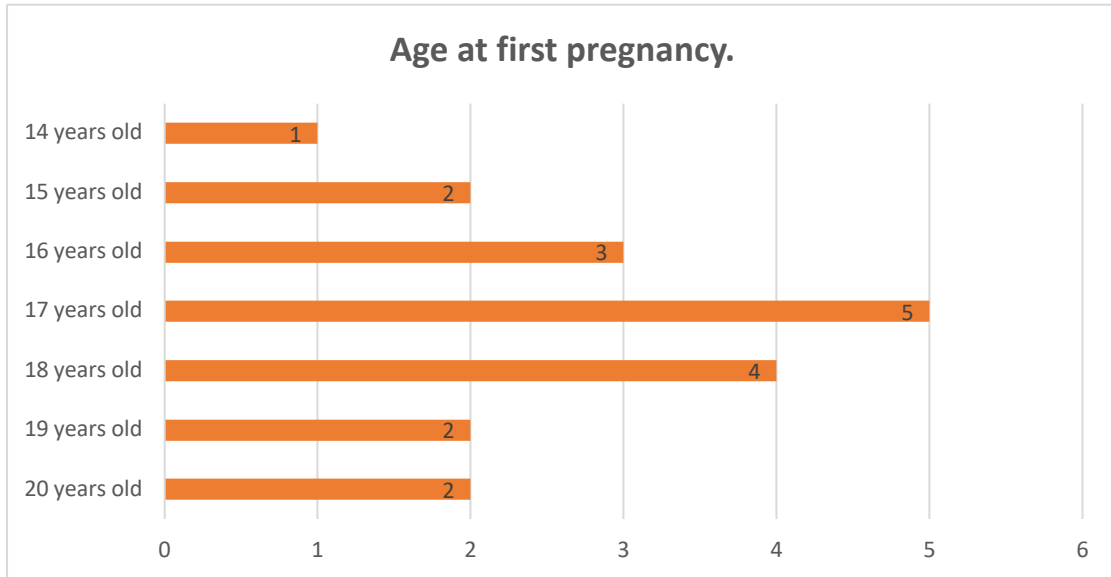


Figure 26

8.12. Criminal involvement²⁰.

Of all 171 children and adolescents who were served by the Family Guardian programme, 5.26% committed a crime. One man was arrested for drug trafficking after he was an adult. And 8 teenagers committed a crime - before the age of 18 - and were sentenced to socio-educational measures. Of these, one was female.

²⁰ Under Brazilian law, there is a separate youth criminal justice system for those aged from 12 to 17 years old (criminal responsibility starts at the age of 12) with separate courts, prisons and parole board. The maximum time that a youth can be imprisoned is for 3 years, regardless the nature of the crime and youths are sentenced to prison with their case being reviewed every six months for release up to a maximum of 3 years (*translator*).

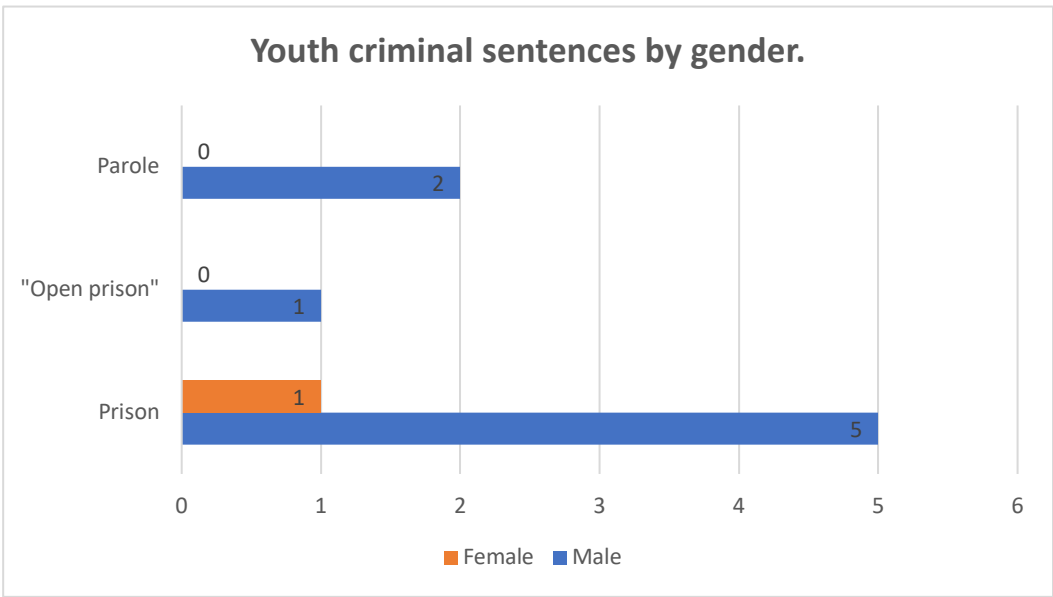


Figure 27

Conclusions.

The research conducted with the families in the programme between 2009 and 2019, allows us to form a picture of the Family Guardian programme and present results achieved by its work with the guardians, in search of the protection and integral development of the child and adolescent.

Regarding the characteristics of the programme, the data revealed that the methodology was effective for both children and adolescents. Children, aged between 0 and 5 years old, formed the majority (39%) of the public served. The second most common age group was 12 to 17 years, followed by those aged 6 to 11 years.

With the experience and qualification of the team, the time for guardian families to be in the programme whilst caring for and protecting their children or adolescents was 36 months - sometimes more, sometimes less. It is worth mentioning that, of the group of children and adolescents who returned to live with their parents, 45% participated in the Family Guardian programme for two years.

The Family Guardian programme is effective for children and adolescents who experience situations of violence, or serious violations of their rights - and their families need special social protection, social welfare. This is because they need to find strategies, together with case workers, to repair the damage caused by the reasons that precipitated their removal from parental care: neglect, abandonment, psychological violence, and alcohol and other drug abuse by the parents of the children and adolescents.

It is possible to show that its methodology prevents institutional or foster care - since 110 (64%) of the children and adolescents lived with their parents or other relatives prior to coming into the programme and throughout the life of the programme, only 5 children and adolescents (3%) were placed in institutions. On the other hand, in cases where children or adolescents were already in institutions, the Family Guardian programme proved to be effective also for their reintegration into their families, since 61 (36%) left institutions to be reintegrated into the extended family.

The Family Guardian programme also contributed to the preservation of family and community bonds, since 38% (17) of children and adolescents returned to live with their parents. And even when removed from them by court order, the family members who took custody were their grandparents, aunts & uncles and siblings. But it is important to underline that there are guardians with other family ties (parental or affective) such as godparents, neighbours, affective grandmother and family friend.

Although the majority of guardians are grandparents, only 20% were over 60 years old. Most were aged between 30 and 59 years old and were female - both served by the programme and in relation to formal guardianship by judicial order. It is worth noting that in 14% of the cases, guardianship was shared by the couple.

The Family Guardian programme has shown that it is possible to keep siblings growing up together, living in the same family. After all, just over half of the guardians (51%) took guardianship of

groups of siblings. Of these, 30% took guardianship of up to 2 children or adolescents; 14%, of 3 children or adolescents and 6% four or more children / adolescents.

Therefore, based on the results of the programme, it is possible to state that it fulfils its objective of guaranteeing family life for children and adolescents. At the time of the survey, 70% (120) of children and adolescents continued to live with the same guardians - providing stability, essential for their holistic development.

Even for those who stopped living with the guardian family, the majority maintained their relationship with them. And the motivation for them to leave their guardian's home is related to the formation of their own families (11 got married), the needs of the young adult (2 went to live alone); a health condition (as in the case of admission of one adolescent to a hospital which supports people with severe cerebral palsy). In only two cases did the separation from the guardian family occur because of committing a crime. And, 9 children and adolescents were placed in institutional care (and as a result, 2 were adopted, 1 returned to live with the extended family and 6 continued in the institution).

The fact that adolescents, especially those over 18, continue to live with family guardians is relevant because it guarantees continuity of care in a critical period, such as the transition to adulthood. The importance of this continuity is evident when we compare it with what happens to children and adolescents also without parental care, but who were in institutional care. The Child and Adolescent Statute provides for a protective measure for institutional care until the adolescent turns 18. As a result, the transition from adolescence to adulthood should be a concern for those who have the integral development of those in institutional care as their responsibility. But, what is found is a rupture at the moment when the adolescent begins adulthood. According to a survey - carried out by the Court of Justice of the State of São Paulo, with Social Workers and Judicial Psychologists in 2018 - the majority of those in institutional care do not receive support for entering into the labour market, or for housing, and some do not have access to support to transition out of care.

It is worth remembering that another important aspect of the permanence of children and adolescents in the same guardian family is stability, which is essential for maintaining mental health at this stage of human development. As already mentioned in chapter six, psychiatrist Bruce Perry (2009), identified that children with stable, positive and healthy family relationships improve their mental health condition.

The research also collected indications of the contribution of the Family Guardian programme to the protection and integral development of children and adolescents.

With regard to protection, it is possible to say that the guardians, upon receiving support from the specialized team, found strategies to deal with the childrens' and adolescents' behaviour and created a safe and stable environment for their integral development. In the research questionnaires, only one case of violence by the guardian family was found and no case of violent death; unfortunately violence is a common cause of death among adolescents in São Paulo. And of the 171 children and adolescents who were assisted by the Family Guardian programme - and responded to the survey - 5.26% (8) adolescents committed a crime and fulfilled socio-educational sentences. Of these, one

was an adolescent girl. And a man was arrested for drug trafficking after he was an adult. Two respondents reported doing child labour, as the first job happened at 10 and 11 years old.

Other indicators point to the promotion of the integral development of children and adolescents under the care of the extended family. Two of them are schooling and age-grade adequate: the vast majority of school aged children and adolescents were in the expected grade for their age, in all age groups. And, according to data from the School Census - available on the website qedu.org.br - in the city of Diadema / SP, between 2009 and 2018, approximately 5% of the students were 2 years old or more behind in school - in the 5th year of the basic 1 cycle; out of 100 children, five were behind in school.

Of those who were 18 years old or older on the date of the survey, 55% had completed high school, with emphasis on women achieving higher education levels than men. Two people reached higher education and 5 said they were taking a training course of which 4 are women. The courses mentioned were: tourism technician, flight attendant, hairdresser, manicurist, young apprentice, administration technician. In addition to these training courses, the English course at Cultura Inglesa was also mentioned.

Another point investigated refers to work and income. Of those interviewed aged 18 at the time of the survey, 12 declared they were working and 19 said they had already worked one day - of these, 08 are women and 11 are men. The age of first job for the majority was between 17 and 18 years old. A highlight is the fact that 55 of the 93 families interviewed, affirm that they do not receive government benefits or income transfers, as well as 40 of the 56 young people over 18 years old not receiving benefits or income transfers.

A third aspect investigated was teenage pregnancy, considering the risk for mother and baby. Through the responses to the questionnaire, 19 people claimed to have children: 17 women and 2 men. Most of them (26.31%) became pregnant the first time at 17 years old; 21.5% became pregnant at 18 and 15.78% at 16. A girl became pregnant at 14 and currently has three children; the others have up to 2 children.

From the results presented, we can conclude that the Family Guardian programme is effective as an alternative care programme for children and adolescents without parental care. The offer of specialized, practical and emotional support to the guardians allowed the child and adolescent to remain in the same family, which gives them stability, security, care and a sense of belonging to the family and community, which are essential for their integral development. In addition to guaranteeing the right to family and community coexistence, it was possible to identify results related to other fundamental rights, such as: life, health, food, education and training. Added to these are the protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of violence or serious violations of their rights.

ANNEX

Speaking at events:

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