

Felices los Niños Foundation Institutional Project 2007

Executive Summary

The Felices los Niños Foundation is a non-profit Institution bound to offer protection to children and adolescents of both genders in situation of social vulnerability, in order to warrant the satisfaction of their basic needs (feeding, clothing, housing), health care, school support and work training, contributing them tools that allow them their social and educational inclusion through the formulation of a Project of Life of their own. In doing so, the Institution develops integrated actions in order to achieve the inclusion of both children and adolescents in their family group, and of the family in social context, favoring the strengthening of their own capabilities and facilitating the resolution of educational, employment, housing, social and health problems by means of intervention before different government and non-governmental agencies which assist specific problem issues.

The task is performed by implementing programs that function as Therapeutic Units, which have the goal of propping up specific situations linked to achieving the different components that are related to the main objective. This implementation extends unto the medium and long term, with growing levels of complexity and inclusion, whose bottom line is the sustainable development of the community. Planning sustainable development implies the efficient use of resources without jeopardizing the chances to satisfy the needs of future generations. Inequity in the distribution of both symbolic and material goods which is characteristic for Argentina has situated her among the most inequitable countries of Latin America which is the most inequitable continent in the world.

Main Objective

- Ø Offer protection to children and adolescents of both genders in situation of social vulnerability, in order to guarantee the satisfaction of their basic needs (feeding, clothing, housing), health care, school support and work training, contributing them tools that allow their social and educational inclusion.

Specific objectives

- ∅ Offer feeding, clothing and housing to street children and adolescents of both genders.
- ∅ Guarantee health care and the therefore needed medical aids for children and adolescents housed by the institution.
- ∅ Early detection of special stimulation and remedial teaching needs, taking actions which make up for lacks and difficulties of integrated development.
- ∅ Contribute behavioural, schooling, and practical tools which aim at the future work occupation.
- ∅ Provide professional mentoring for the development of individual Projects of Life which healthily synthesize social insertion with personal autonomy.

Conceptual Framework

According to current INDEC (National Institute of Statistics and Censuses) data in Argentina some 56.4% of minors aged less than 18 years are poor and 23.6% of them are indigent. More than one half live in the three large urban conglomerates of Buenos Aires, Córdoba and Santa Fe. Among its 37 million inhabitants Argentina counts 16 million poor people, which gives some idea about the inequity level of the distribution of riches.

Some 1,500,000 children aged 4 to 17 work in Argentina and it is estimated that just in the city of Buenos Aires there are about 3,500 children on the street. Of these, some 90% would be *paco* consumers.

Poverty results in lack of means, as growing masses of population become excluded of technological change processes and of the competitive development required by the productive and financial circuits, not only because of lack of schooling but mainly due to evolution sequels which many times cannot be reversed.

The population which is excluded from production and consumer circuits is exposed to publicity which stimulates the consumption of consumer goods and the consumer flaunting of sectors of greater purchasing power.

When added to the feeling of frustration which results from other's squandering, the lack of a solution to one's own basic needs results in different demonstrations of social discomfort.

Poverty intensifies processes of family disintegration, which expose children and adolescents of both genders through different mechanisms to an early situation of prolonged street stay, with the resulting vulnerability for the development of diverse social pathologies.

The lack of opportunities for personal development, social exclusion and lack of communication are, among others, risk factors which day by day push children and youths toward the development of social pathologies, particularly addictions.

The Institution seeks to establish social functions which represent protection factors able to counteract the risk factors to which minors are exposed by means of their street stay.

The strengthening of protection factors is propped up at the Therapeutic Units which tackle the crucial themes needed to achieve this goal.

On one side the Therapeutic Units are aimed at the optimization of evolution development by means of early stimulation, educational strengthening and work training, and on the other, the approach of selective sets of problems which require personalized and specialized attention, such as violence, early detection of addictions, disabilities, etc.

They pose a therapeutic approach which starts by approaching children and adolescents at social risk in order to offer them immediate care which increasingly goes beyond this point towards the inclusion of the family nucleus, particularly of the mother, and the formulation of a Life Project linked to their family reinsertion or to autonomy when coming of age for those who lack the chance of family bonds.

The Institution's Therapeutic Units

- Ø Early Stimulation and Schooling Strengthening: In first place warranting adequate feeding and medical care, action is completed by a formal schooling service, specific remedial schooling and extracurricular educational activities. The educational aspect is strengthened by early stimulation and the development of both technological and art skills by means of workshops.
- Ø Work Training: Meant for providing young people with the knowledge, mindset, and skills needed to allow their insertion in the job market through the development of a specific know-how or else start a job activity as a small business. The training and production workshops are aimed at the following tasks: plant nursery, organic orchard, bakery, jam manufacturing, sewing, woodworking, and car mechanics. Besides, there are plans for the addition of building maintenance and electricity workshops.

Ø Individual attention: Aimed at an early pathology or risk factor treatment in order to facilitate a successful performance in the process of social insertion and family linkage. For this purpose the Institution has a professional team fit for the approach and therapeutics of multiple issues at her disposal.

Ø Social linkage: This Therapeutic Unit strengthens the linkage among children and adolescents within the Institution, their families and the community, with regard to an egress based on the construction of a Project of Life. It is the last stage of both children's and adolescent's residence at the Institution and is the start of a linkage of further support and monitoring, aimed at setting up cooperation and containment networks for those who egress as well as for their families.

Interdisciplinary team:

<u>Social workers:</u>	Lic. Arroyo, Francisco Lic. Leguizamón, Fabiana Lic. Moreira, Leonor María (EGB) Lic. Pazos Miralles, Patricia (Inicial)
<u>Educational psychologist:</u>	Lic. Caero, María Elba
<u>Psychologists:</u>	Lic. Ramón, Paola Andrea Lic. Loizaga, Augusto Angel
<u>Educational Assistants:</u>	Abbiati, Graciela (Polimodal) Alaniz, María Verónica (Inicial) Dávila, Verónica (Inicial)
<u>Phonoaudiologist:</u>	Herlein, Valeria (Inicial)
<u>Levelling teacher:</u>	Portugal, Lidia Verónica (EGB)