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Pastoral accompaniment for the reduction of psychosocial risks in adolescence.

Acompañamiento pastoral para la reducción de riesgos psicosociales en la adolescencia .

Mg. Yusty Carolina Restrepo-Segura¹, Mg. Leisy Magdaly Arroyave-Taborda²

¹ Magister en Intervenciones Psicosociales , carolinasegura2000@gmail.com; [orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2565-0416](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2565-0416); Universidad Católica Luis Amigó; Medellín, Colombia

² Magister en Adicciones ; leisy.arroyaveta@amigo.edu.co; [orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3982-2805](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3982-2805); Universidad Católica Luis Amigó; Medellín, Colombia

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RESUMEN

Palabras Clave:
adolescente, estrategias
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Resumen: El presente artículo resultado de investigación tuvo como objetivo identificar el impacto de las estrategias pastorales en la prevención de riesgos sociales y la construcción de estrategias de afrontamientos en adolescentes. Se orientó desde un paradigma histórico hermenéutico, enfoque cualitativo, se indagó por las experiencias educativas que imparten agentes pastorales en el acompañamiento psicosocial a adolescentes en los programas de la Arquidiócesis de Medellín. Su principal hallazgo muestra evidencia la estrategia de “Escuelas de vida” como una forma de recuperar la dignidad humana del adolescente y de proveerle de diferentes herramientas para hacerle frente a la adversidad. Se concluye que es necesario hacer un llamado a la corresponsabilidad de familia y sociedad con estos procesos de apoyo y acompañamiento psicosocial para reducir de manera significativa la exposición de esta población a situaciones de vulnerabilidad.

ABSTRACT

Keywords:
Teen, educational strategies,
education society, social
protection

The article presents the result of research, aimed to identify the impact of pastoral strategies in the prevention of social risks and the construction of coping strategies in adolescents. It was oriented from a historical hermeneutical paradigm, qualitative approach, it was investigated the educational experiences imparted by pastoral agents in the psychosocial accompaniment to adolescents in the programs of the Archdiocese of Medellin. Its main finding shows evidence of the “Schools of Life” strategy to recover the human dignity of adolescents and to provide them with different tools to face adversity. It is concluded that it is necessary to call for the co-responsibility of family and society with these processes of psychosocial support and accompaniment to significantly reduce the exposure of this population to situations of vulnerability.

*Corresponding author.

E-mail address: carolina.segura2000@gmail.com (Yusti Carolina Segura)



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Introduction

Young people have been the object of intervention of State programs that seek to reduce social risks, since they are considered a stage that, due to their biological and psychological characteristics, are perhaps the most complex age in the life of a human being, and are therefore highly vulnerable to different social problems, including the consumption of psychoactive substances.

At this stage the human being struggles to find himself and define himself, in this way he makes decisions according to the context, the relationships he manages to establish and the social influences he has within his groups of interaction, these situations represent for him the possibility of choosing in his process of individuation from his family nucleus, This process implies a greater intellectual maturity that will allow him to discern between the different roles offered by society, the internalization of norms according to his identification with a specific group, the selection of social and alternative contexts to develop separately from his family and the acquisition of thoughts, beliefs and attitudes according to his identification groups (Coleman and Hendry, 2003).

This is where the risk for this population arises, given that the social conditions in Colombia constantly represent a series of social problems that accompany the drastic physical, emotional, and intellectual changes that they need to face.

In addition to the above, the demographic, socioeconomic and educational characteristics of the population contribute to this problem, since it is usual that the lower the socioeconomic opportunities, the higher the level of exposure to risk, a situation that forces parents to be absent in the processes of raising and educating their children. This is evidenced by the non-creation of a paternal interpersonal bond and the search for affection and understanding in other identification groups (Muñoz and Graña, 2000; Cid-Monckton and Pedrão, 2011).

Thus, it is possible to deduce that the lack of family involvement, in terms of support and strengthening

of emotional bonds, has an impact on adolescents, promoting the absence of positive attitudes to create protective factors, difficulties in building self-concept, lack of values and communication skills to express what is happening to them and what they need help or support with (Friedman and Utada, 1992; Becerra, 2008; Cid-Monckton and Pedrão, 2011).

Despite vulnerability, it is always possible to generate protective factors, but for social intervention to be effective, families must be involved in the process of accompanying their children, supporting their life projects and guiding their education, creating external support networks, fostering an open educational climate, providing guidance and training in values and ethical principles, social models with positive coping resources that function as behavioral modelers, a balance between responsibility and social expectations, the development of cognitive competencies for moral discernment, experiences of self-efficacy, confidence and positive self-concept, proactive attitudes in the face of frustrating events and experiences of meaning and significance in relation to one's own existence (López, Bulas, León, and Ramírez, 2005); Cid-Monckton and Pedrão, 2011) objectives in line with what pastoral agents seek.

For these reasons, an empathetic emotional relationship is sought with the main caregivers, or even in some cases this link is achieved with the pastoral agent or with the members of the school of life groups, creating external support networks when the family does not fulfill its protective role, and strengthening in this very fragile population the skills and competencies for coping and conscious decision making in the face of the risk of consumption.

In the process of accompaniment in the formation of adolescents, the figure of the pastoral agent emerges, understood in the social pastoral as the person who is responsible for planning, executing, evaluating and leading the different social projects, usually within the institution there is a person in charge, who from his own experience of life transformation shares his experiences and the process of reeducation, and who is responsible for the times of trainer and advisor to other pastoral agents, represented by the figure

of psychology and social work practitioners from different universities in Medellín.

Materials and Methods

This research was conducted from a historical hermeneutic paradigm, qualitative approach, through which it was possible to approach in detail towards pastoral agents and their intervention practices with the adolescent population, to know their reality closely, seeking to understand the impact of pastoral intervention strategies in the reduction and intervention in the different social problems faced by adolescents, it was sought to detail in depth the perception of pastoral agents against their interventions and the result of the same on the adolescents with whom they usually work (Creswell, 2013; Gurdíán-Fernández, 2007).

For the collection of information, the focus group was used: "The focus group technique is a space of opinion to capture the feelings, thoughts and lives of individuals, provoking self-explanations to obtain qualitative data" (Hamui-Sutton and Varela-Ruiz, 2013, p.56) and the interview, which from the qualitative approach according to Bonilla and Rodríguez (1997) becomes a very useful instrument, since it allows to inquire about the problem in order to understand it as it is conceptualized and interpreted by the subjects under study, this is given as a conversation or in a face-to-face verbal exchange, and its purpose is to inquire in detail what someone thinks or feels about a particular topic or situation.

For the interpretation of the information, the contributions made by the participants were coded, 4 categories of analysis were identified: adolescents, family, pastoral agent, and educational strategies, in order to guarantee the right to confidentiality, the names of the interviewees were coded with the participant's pseudonym and an assigned number (Strauss & Corbin, 2002).

Then, by means of the atlas ti 8.0 program, the information collected was contrasted with the initial bibliographic sources that supported the research, showing meeting points, differences, similarities, and

relationship of findings.

Finally, the information was interpreted to extract the meanings, constructions and knowledge shared by the pastoral agents, and the results were generated by triangulating the information collected throughout the research process.

Results.

For the presentation of the results, the most relevant findings were grouped in X sections, the first one shows the perceptions of the pastoral agents with respect to the population served in the different programs they lead, the second one outlines the most important and representative program of the archdiocese "Schools of Life" and finally the contributions of this strategy to the processes of social transformation in the life of the adolescent population are shown.

Perceptions of pastoral agents on adolescence

The pastoral agent is represented by psychology and social work students who carry out their professional practice in the institution, leading the formative processes and psychosocial accompaniment offered by the Archdiocese of Medellín, which indicates that although the pastoral agents active at the moment have an academic formation from their universities of origin, the archdiocese does not currently have qualified professionals from the university degree to lead these processes, since the only basic employee does not have a professional formation, but with his experience and life formation that has allowed him to lead these processes, in the archdiocese there are currently no qualified professionals from the university level to lead these processes, since the only basic employee does not have professional training, but his experience and life formation has allowed him to know these processes from his own experience.

When inquiring about this aspect, we find answers such as the following:

"We are practicing psychology and social work, and we are studying between the sixth and ninth semester, at this moment we are in the process of professional practice, from the universities they delegate us a

practice advisor, but here in the archdiocese the one who accompanies us is the one who leads all the processes of reeducation and accompaniment of young people, who is formed from the experience of having lived the situations of risk and vulnerability that young people suffer” (Informant 4, Pastoral Agent).

This situation leads to the fact that most interventions are mediated more by experience, creativity and initiative than by theoretical references that provide epistemological support, because although practitioners have basic theoretical knowledge, without a trained professional to guide them, they may have difficulties in planning interventions based on theories from their training. However, they have advisors who, through dialogue and disciplinary orientation, accompany these processes and contribute to this epistemological support, so that their discourses are permeated by some theories according to the orientation of their professional profiles in training.

It is important to know that interventions must be oriented to the needs, expectations, and characteristics of the population, so it is necessary to specify in this case, the way in which adolescents are perceived, characterized and described by pastoral agents, since the actions planned to provide psychosocial support to these groups will depend on these perceptions.

When asked about this aspect, the pastoral agents express a detailed conception based on the World Health Organization (WHO), emphasizing adolescence as a stage of the life cycle, supporting their conceptions from positions and theoretical knowledge acquired in the professional training process.

This is evidenced by the contributions of the participants.

“According to the WHO and other organizations, the adolescent is between 12 and 18 years of age and is a person who is in constant change both in body and intellect, as well as in everything that integrates the physical, in terms of maturity, all those changes that a beard, all those physical changes” (Participant 1, Pastoral Agent).

They also give importance to the remarkable and great changes faced by the adolescent, defining this stage as crucial for the development of the human being because of the different changes that he/she must undergo and face in order to transition to a more adult age.

“I understand adolescence as that person who is in a transition from childhood to adulthood, when there are all the changes in self-concept, identity is being defined, the person is acquiring a unique identity, so to speak, that differentiates him/her from other people, so there are all the physical and mental changes, it is like a person who defines him/herself in all this self-concept and in him/herself” (Participant 10, Pastoral Agent).

On the other hand, it is common to find in the speeches, the vision of the adolescent as an individual exposed to different factors of vulnerability, and that due to the characteristics of adolescence, they are faced with problems and social phenomena for which they are often unprepared, acquiring self-destructive behaviors such as the consumption of psychoactive substances (PAS) and membership in armed groups.

“There is a very general characteristic, and that is that all the children are in a vulnerable condition, in the schools we work with children who have disciplinary problems, that the teachers have identified them with situations of consumption and that many of them come from domestic violence, with children from penitentiary centers in fact there is a background there, There are juvenile offenders, the boys in one way or another are related to delinquency for some of the reasons they are in situations of delinquency, the boys we work with in the neighborhoods are generally unemployed, out of school, active consumers, substance abusers in general, so each one is, from their profile, how can we say it? in a situation of vulnerability” (Participant 3, Pastoral Agent).

In this sense, adolescents are perceived as a population that requires greater effort on the part of pastoral agents to link them to the groups, given the

difficult age they are going through, according to the participants' discourses, they are exposed to problems that put their safety and integral development at risk, due to the social characteristics of the places where they live, plus the changes that the stage brings and the value judgments that adults generally make about this population, they lack their own motivation to seek recreational spaces, help or alternative training to the academic one, in fact, there is a concern to seek strategies that allow them to link them and increase their motivation to re-signify their stories and life projects.

This is how one of the participants put it.

“We have adolescents between 13 and 15 years of age and they are in their adolescence, going through that stage and it is one of the groups where we have to work more, suddenly their participation is less active than that of the others who are older, and we have come to the conclusion that because of this, because they are beginning that stage of adolescence where there is shyness, where my partner is going to think, then yes, this group differs a little bit from the others in that sense, but their participation is less active” (Participant 9, Pastoral Worker).

Another contribution in this regard.

“The proposal is made to the youngsters who have these characteristics, not for all of the school, so how has the methodology been, in some schools they take out from different classrooms children that the teacher has already identified, who are very bad academically and with discipline difficulties, in other schools the modality is that it is the acceleration group that generally are young children who generally have already lost years and were going to be kicked out of school, and by law they give them the opportunity to catch up again with those who are in a regular education, and with those from SENTE and those from the neighborhoods, they are boys who have already been kicked out of all the schools, of the formal education schools, they have all been kicked out, they are no longer received anywhere, and these boys are there already struggling to finally finish high

school and then they arrive with many difficulties of consumption, of discipline, and the school separates us a group that is being the most conflictive of the school, in some cases it is the whole group, in other cases there are several boys from different classrooms” (Participant 5, Pastoral Agent).

In this order of ideas, what is most evident in the speeches of the pastoral agents is the sensitivity they show towards the vulnerability of people who represent psychosocial risk, therefore the actions of accompaniment, training and intervention are always oriented from the concern to help the neediest, to guide personal processes and to achieve transformation from the rescue of the human in each of the adolescents who participate, that is why their most significant program are the schools of life, from which they intend to resignify life stories.

Schools of life, a reflection for the re-signification of the life project of adolescents.

The schools of life represent the most important program of the Archdiocese of Medellin in terms of social work with adolescents and young people belonging to vulnerable populations, from there the resignification of the life project is given from the guidance and mediation of pastoral agents who lead the groups from the human, social and spiritual formation, interventions oriented from interdisciplinarity to empower adolescents in decision making and the development of critical thinking to address the different social problems to which they are exposed.

This is how the participants put it.

“...the central foundation of schools of life is that they are very experiential workshops, very experiential and very reflective, so starting with, for example, a game, a dynamic, that they can experience and live, it is also given as a reflection. And that it is not just a game and a dynamic, but that it leads them to reflection, which is the guiding thread of schools of life” (participant 7, Pastoral Agent).

The schools of life represent an opportunity to be able to change the risky lifestyle that many adolescents tend to adopt, since the experiences of young leaders who succeed in the process of reeducation with whom they identify, encourage them to initiate and complete the process, so that they have as an example those referents of identification.

“There is a separate material that has already been working for us, some videos that initially have been shown in all the schools of life, there is a presentation of schools of life, which we use it a lot, because of the testimonies of the young people themselves, what they do is to see pairs of them talking about the schools of life, we use it initially as a motivator, and others that allow us to make reflections very much from their naturalness” (Participant 5, Pastoral Agent).

This strategy has achieved significant recognition in the different places where it has been promoted, this status arises from the changes that have been achieved in the lives of adolescents who have redefined their life history, have acquired positive leadership skills, become examples of life for their peers and built support groups among themselves for risk prevention and the search for a better future.

“This becomes a voice to voice, because one arrives at the schools and sees, let’s say, pastoral agents who are leaders of the process and who have always been involved in it, and they say look, there are schools of life, why don’t they bring schools of life to our group, and why schools of life to them and not to us, schools of life, then you start to hear schools of life...for example, for me who just arrived this first semester, I saw that everyone wanted the leader and they said, but I want schools of life” (Participant 4, Pastoral Agent).

The example of the other’s life is a strategy that allows them to put themselves in the other’s place, to feel understood from the same emotion and situation they are going through, the fact that someone else managed to overcome allows them to be self-motivated to change, in the face of the loss of hope, recognizing oneself in the other’s story is an opportunity to recover it, to move forward and resume their life project and

to achieve positive changes in their lives.

“I know that man, that man is from my neighborhood, and apart from what you see, you can tell a few steps of what happened, and then it will remain as a more direct memory, that suddenly we tell them something that maybe that speech that we give them, I don’t know if someone has not paid attention and a video will make it easier for them to remember and what we wanted to say will also be easier to remember” (Participant 1, Pastoral Agent).

Another contribution in this regard:

“In our situation, we presented the videos, and one of the kids from the institution said, I studied there, I know the people in that video, that teacher taught me, so it’s like if they could, I can too, and that’s interesting” (Participant 3, Pastoral Agent).

To this extent, the strategies implemented are oriented to respond to the most relevant social problems that afflict the population. Furthermore, these interventions are theoretically mediated by the basic training of the practitioners, who assume psychological and social postures articulated with the object of the programs, reflection, and experiential workshops.

“We try to orient the workshops in a very cognitive way” (Participant 2, Pastoral Agent).

“In general, I try to base myself a lot on the psychological theories that we see to work on the different topics, so from there, from my career, in addition, one tries to change the dynamics, to make the dynamics more pleasant, more participatory, and from there, we start working, and if we have to make a video, a discussion, that is the experience that we have, we try to lead to that personal reflection for change” (Participant 7, Pastoral Agent).

The pastoral agents evaluate the impact of the programs based on the verbalizations, life stories and sharing of experiences lived by the adolescents in the schools of life, they do not directly have a systematization of experiences or a measurement

instrument, they highlight the verbalizations and reflections achieved by the participants because of their passage through the program.

One girl said, in a workshop when we started this year, that a girl came and asked her what she learned and she said, “Oh, for example, I had it bad for Carlos, but since we started here with the school of life, yes or no, Carlos, we are already friends. And that is a very nice integrity of the group” (Participant 2, Pastoral Agent).

Another contribution.

“...then one says to the boys, let’s not change attitudes because here we also have experiences with what was the group of leaders, who were boys from different groups of the schools of life, we spent a year, a year and a half in the process, when I least thought the group was over, ah I can’t go because you know what, I started to work, the other one didn’t go to the university, and one says what happened? We are going to follow up on them, they started working, they started studying at the university, then one says, then that was useful, sometimes when they started coming here, here they realized that a job had to be respected and today this group of boys, the majority with whom one communicates, are working and are studying university careers” (Participant 1, Pastoral Agent).

For adolescents who go through life schools, change means a new opportunity to start from scratch, their lives change significantly when they manage to understand their value as human beings, restructure their life project, and acquire pro-social skills that allow them to adapt in a better way to a society that has much to offer them.

The transformation process: the transition from adolescent consumer to social leader.

We live in a society that currently bombards adolescents with an endless number of new drugs, substances that promise to improve their emotional states and allow them to disconnect from a reality they usually want to escape from due to different situations, loss of meaning in life, perception of inequality

in educational, labor and economic opportunities, feeling of loneliness, constant peer pressure and abandonment by the family or in many occasions the same inheritance or learning by imitation of a usual behavior in the family of origin.

“There is a very important thing that I have been able to deepen with more time with the children, the vast majority, the parents are consumers, the vast majority, we belong to a generation that has advanced a lot in the consumption of psychoactive substances, and a large part are children of parents who are consumers, as an inheritance, there is like that, and the other thing too, which is like peer pressure, peer pressure plays a very important role in the role there with their peers, from come on let’s do it, you are dumb, no, come on let’s try, that is pure peer pressure”.

In this way, consumption becomes an opportunity for adolescents to flee or cope with these situations, and in most cases ends in a chronic addiction problem that they can no longer control. They begin to carry the social stigma of being potheads, misfits, or punks, in a society that instead of assuming responsibility for creating the problem, evades it by excluding and turning a blind eye to the situation, which is how the addict, the consumer or the sick person loses his identity, ceases to be a person, and becomes unwanted by society.

In this sense, Escuelas de vida seems to represent for adolescents the opportunity to be recognized again as human beings, to be named as subjects of rights and to be valued as people with the potential to improve themselves, to face the various problems that afflict them and to build a new life project to return to society, a process where the name is recovered and the label or social stigma they have appropriated is erased.

“Another thing that I think is very important is that we also strengthen the self-esteem of the children, because many times it has happened in the schools, in the institutions where we are intervening, that they are categorized as the pests, the bad guys, the mariguaneros and the vicious ones, and that is a chip that gets into them, of course, and then they

start to believe that story, and they themselves say I am the bad guy. These days we were talking to an educational institution, and they told us that you are here because we are the most pests, the most foolish, the most of everything. We try to transform that by making it positive in a more pedagogical way, the change of chip is to the discourse that here we are the leaders, here we are neither the pests, nor the fools. We are not the pests, nor the fools, but rather we are empowering those skills that they have and not, as it were, lowering them more". (Participant 1, Pastoral Agent)

The mentors, advisors and pastoral leaders that emerge from the social pastoral, accompany and guide the process of self-improvement, where the key focuses on the formation of community leaders that from the same experience can generate in others the invitation to overcome and take charge of themselves to progress, its emphasis is on the search for group cohesion, that from participation, teamwork and life experience, can generate motivation in participants to help each other to overcome the obstacles they face every day.

"That there is a better group cohesion, that a leadership process is proposed, but everything starts with a small diagnosis that we make when we go to observe to try to identify the different needs that the population has and according to that, we plan an ABC of the activities that we are going to develop" (Participant 10, Pastoral agent).

Among the problems that afflict and are present in the lives of adolescents are the consumption of psychoactive substances, to which they usually have easy access, the characteristics of the neighborhoods, low-income families and the infinite risks that arise in these unsupervised environments, represent the opportunity to immerse themselves in forbidden things, maladaptive behaviors, and psychosocially heavy environments.

"...the psychodiagnosis we did at the beginning of the semester told us that the street is a negative factor for them, because it leads them to do bad things, also at school, like the family circle, there are very lonely

children whose parents hardly take care of them, so they are looking for love, for attention, so they are children who have behavioral and emotional problems, and the teachers tell us that this is why they are very lonely in the family, so they are always trying to get attention. From the psychology of behavioral theory, the author talks about the fact that the environment also becomes a risk factor, because we are, let's say, immersed in a situation of drug addiction problems, in a problem of domestic violence, so all of that, in some way, is taken in by the adolescent, the child who is all the time, seeing these types of situations, so I think that the environment will always affect the adolescent" (Participant 4, Pastoral agent).

This has represented a challenge for the pastoral agents in the search for the construction and strengthening of protective factors that arise from the same dynamic that grows and occurs in the group of the Schools of Life, in this way what is sought is to generate spaces and protective communities, containment, mutual accompaniment and development of life skills, allowing them to cope with vulnerability and to find the tools for coping and overcoming that will allow them to get out of these situations when they are already immersed.

"Well, I think that the protective factors are the school, we are also there as groups of life schools, the children themselves say that there are teachers who support them a lot, who guide them a lot, then the teachers also play a very important role, in some families, not in all, some have parents far away or do not live with their parents, but with their grandparents, so in some families and in others they do not. Then in the risk factors, as the children themselves said, the street, bad friendships, substance abuse, peer pressure, but what happens then, when I see in these children that these levels of risk factors increase is because they lack life skills, then what this group of schools of life does, it also bets on strengthening life skills, that is where we work on all the issues, where we articulate all the workshops that have been developed throughout the year, implicitly we are strengthening the protective factors with each of the workshops". (Participant 3, Pastoral Agent).

These accompaniment processes have generated young leaders who represent overcoming, success, and an experience of emerging from an abyss, the sharing of experiences, the example of others, and the accompaniment of those who have lived through the same situations, is the main tool of the Schools of Life to generate expectations and motivations in adolescents to want to overcome and be better for themselves. To this end, they make use of office tools that allow them to transmit the messages of those who have achieved change, through videos, publication of stories on the home page, YouTube channel and social networks, resources that are easily accessible and of great interest to adolescents of the 21st century.

“... I say that people are motivated by the experience of others, so how can you not bring all those young people who have lived schools of life, through those videos, if you see them watching those videos, of the kids telling about the schools of life... and they are kids whose language is like that, a new language, proper of the kids, so they are like, *uy parce es enserio*, if he went out, I can too” (Participant 1, Pastoral Agent).

In fact, it is the credibility of the population that promotes in the pastoral agents the interest in accompanying these life processes, given that in their speeches it is possible to detect the emotion, the desire and passion to help them, which implies that beyond a theoretical knowledge to guide the interventions, a vocation, and a real interest in helping those who are accompanied is needed.

Discussions.

It seems that, due to the characteristics of this stage, the degree of vulnerability increases, and with it the current concern to seek alternatives to protect them from these risks.

Therefore, the Archdiocese of Medellin has taken care to protect those who need it most and to provide opportunities to get ahead, so the pastoral agents in their representation have identified the different factors that increase the risk among adolescents in the communities of Medellin, especially social factors such as: the presence of criminal gangs, social

pressure to encourage consumption or crime, family and economic characteristics, and the very ways of relating in an environment as hostile as the one they are usually exposed to when belonging to low socioeconomic strata.

Authors such as Hein, Blanco and Mertz (2004); Sanabria and Uribe (2010); Ballesteros and Cortés (2001), coincide with some of those described by pastoral agents, classify social risks in 6 areas covering the individual and sociocultural, including factors such as individual factors related to the ability to solve problems, IQ, family factors such as family cohesion, mental illness and parenting styles; factors linked to the peer group, highlighting belonging and identification with peers who engage in illicit and risky activities including PAS consumption; school factors related to the lack of support from the teacher, alienation and school violence as risks, and finally social and socioeconomic factors linked to the lack of community commitment to the protection of adolescents, exclusion and stigmatization of adolescents, a discourse that converges with that mentioned by the participants.

This marked interest in the protection of children and adolescents, not only in Colombia but throughout the world, has led social institutions and the health sector to seek different alternatives to reduce these risks, hence the importance of properly understanding the developmental stage of the population being intervened in this regard, In this regard, it is clear that in order to explain the adolescent category, pastoral agents use valid resources to lend credibility to their discourse, defining adolescents theoretically from the perspective of the evolutionary development of human beings, corresponding to the adolescent cycle; however, they do not go any deeper, nor do they show a more technical mastery of the terms.

In this regard, several authors mention that when accompanying intervention processes with adolescents, it is necessary for the professionals involved to be knowledgeable about the characteristics of the population and the processes of comprehensive development during this stage to adequately address their problems and guide the intervention

from promotion and prevention actions, as well as generating processes of family involvement in these processes (Gaete, 2015).

Another relevant issue is the reflective capacity that the social professional must possess, to read the context so that their interventions are aimed at responding to the demands and needs of the population they serve (Sánchez and López, 2013), from this position the pastoral agents intend from the outset to approach the population from love, acceptance of the other, the belief in the potential of each human being to succeed and from the entrepreneurial spirit of planning and implementing intervention actions that favour the construction of protective factors within the population.

Therefore, it is possible for interventions to be effective, given that the approach and the initial critical reading of the population, provides pastoral agents with relevant information to make specific, focused and, above all, contextualised accompaniments. In the same way, Schön (1998) proposes that it is the function of the professional who accompanies the different intervention processes to manage within their environment and from a theoretical character the propositional knowledge acquired in the university and the knowledge in action obtained in the field of practice, as shown by the participants, when mentioning that for their interventions they use different theoretical models that can sustain their work, but that beyond this, it is the population itself that teaches them and guides them in their actions.

However, when investigating the characteristics highlighted by pastoral workers in relation to the adolescent population and in agreement with various authors, we find: the search for identity, rebelliousness, vulnerability in the face of different social factors, the search for autonomy, exposure to social pressure, physical and biological, social and psychological changes that often end up overwhelming their coping capacities, and the search for maturity, where it is crucial to move from childhood to adulthood (Aberastury, 1969; Oliva, 2004; Andújar, 2011; Cerezo y Méndez, 2012).

Indeed, these characteristics, according to the contributions of the participants, make boys tend to develop risky behaviours, which according to other contributions can bring them negative biopsychosocial consequences, these characteristics are linked to the high degree of need for experimentation, susceptibility to imitation, tendency to make mistakes due to peer pressure, identification with ideas of transgression of the norm, deficit for autonomy and taking a stand before the group, and high need for approval by their peers (Florenzano, 1998; Janin, 2014; Rosabal, Romero, Gaquín y Hernández, 2015).

This is why the process of accompanying adolescents approaches the spiritual component in the schools of life programmes, not from a religious point of view, but from the capacity to be self-reflective, to take charge of oneself, and to carry out the intervention activities in a very experiential way, which has a positive impact on the lives of the adolescents.

In this sense Romero (2012); Morales (2014); Gonzales (2017), mentions this spiritual component as essential in the life of human beings, taking into account that this type of accompaniment allows to strengthen all the dimensions from the inside, where the intention is to highlight the human being as an integral being that is reflected not only in the way he is, but how he does, so it is possible to touch not only his personal history but also the community and social life, to face precisely all the obstacles that in the external world will be found.

In the same way, the pastoral agents express how the spiritual life allows adolescents to take charge of their own lives, to develop a new life project and to build protective factors and coping strategies in the face of the reality they are confronted with daily.

Thus, it has been important to give new meaning to the life project, to recover their value as people, and to generate processes of deep reflexivity that allow them to become aware to find a purpose in life and recover the meaning of their own existence.

Similarly, Guirao (2013) mentions that, in the processes of accompanying adolescents, from

spirituality, it is possible to generate a personal search for meaning and purpose, where it is possible to awaken awareness, connection and relationship with others that allows the human being to transcend, thus recovering hope, relief and the inner self.

In a certain way, from the schools of life, spaces, experiences and reflections are provided that allow adolescents to reconnect with their inner self in order to find the best path, move away from risk factors and acquire the necessary skills to face the social problems immersed in their environment, with group strengthening, where group cohesion itself allows them to function as a protective factor against the possible vulnerability of any member of the group.

In this same sense, Salgado (2014), highlights another important issue in these processes, from his point of view, the accompaniment of groups of adolescents should seek the recovery of hope, satisfaction with life and above all the spiritual well-being of people that allows them to build sources of emotional and social support, from the promotion of pro-social values, which in turn are associated with less use and abuse of drugs, increasing physical and psychological health, in addition to functioning as an engine of prevention, recovery and tolerance in the face of difficulties.

Finally, in social intervention processes, according to Páramo (2011), it is always important to build individual and group (social community) protection factors that allow the population at risk to generate support groups to prevent, mitigate and intervene in situations that generate vulnerability.

In this way, the schools of life seek to do precisely this, to provide strategies, tools and coping skills to young people to face the social context in which they are immersed and beyond this, to regain self-confidence, rebuild their life project and learn from those who have succeeded so that with their example they feel capable of achieving it, also recovering the value they have as people who are often excluded or sidelined by social prejudice.

Conclusions.

Psychosocial risks in adolescence are generating more and more attention from governmental and non-governmental organisations, and as a result there are a series of programmes aimed at providing protection, care and accompaniment, hence the interest in the work represented and carried out by the pastoral agents of the Archdiocese of Medellín, This has been effective in transforming the lives of young people and adolescents who are immersed in highly vulnerable and risky conditions and environments, and it seems that by belonging to a group where they are respected, important and listened to, they find the possibility of directing their own lives.

Despite the fact that the interventions of the pastoral agents are mediated more by their own experiences and practice in the context of intervention than by theoretical or therapeutic models, in the face of the different social risks immersed in the population that they intervene from the pastoral programmes, these processes have shown satisfactory results, in which the members have achieved processes of cohesion and group identification, These processes have shown satisfactory results, in which the members have achieved processes of cohesion and group identification, the same in which it has been possible from the example of other adolescents who have managed to face adversity, move forward, recover hope and rebuild the life project from the appreciation of the human being that they represent, the vision of oneself tends to change in a positive way, improving their internal resources to move forward in life.

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