

## Article

# “My Father Put Me in a Patera So I Could Study”: Key Aspects of Socio-Educational Support for Minors Who Migrate Alone

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**Abstract:** The migration process for minors who migrate alone represents a complex reality, one entailing exciting life projects but which often clashes with a host society that at times responds in a way shaped by stereotypes and prejudices. In this regard, the role of public and private institutions responsible for the care and custody of these minors is of the utmost importance. This is the point of departure of this study: to explore the multicultural and inclusive practices that are implemented in the process of socio-educational support for minors who migrate alone. Taking as a reference the closest context, as a case study, and employing a qualitative methodological approach, 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals from Centers for the Protection of Minors, Institutes of Compulsory Secondary Education (secondary schools), and third-sector entities involved in socio-educational intervention with minors who migrate alone in the province of Cordoba (Spain). The results show, firstly, the complexity of the process behind the socio-educational inclusion of these minors, mainly due to their backgrounds; and, furthermore, the role of the different expectations of the professionals involved with regards to this group’s educational and labor-oriented development, along with the importance of the diversity of socio-educational intervention strategies used, focused on individualized attention and with a comprehensive approach. In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the importance of tackling the task of socio-educational care in a coordinated manner, without forgetting the cultural backgrounds and previous experiences that these minors have when they join these protection and educational systems. It is, therefore, necessary to continue to implement these inclusive practices that promote the comprehensive development of minors and facilitate their transition to adult life, as should be done with any other minor facing situations of social vulnerability.

**Keywords:** migrant minors; socio-educational inclusion; protection system; juvenile centers



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## 1. Introduction

Migrant minors who travel to Spain alone, without their families, represent a group that has been widely addressed in the scientific literature. One of the recurring themes in the research has focused on combining efforts to dispel stereotypes and prejudices that are aggravated by using certain terms or words to refer to this group. Different works use terms such as “minor under guardianship” and “unaccompanied foreign minors”, or MENA. These concepts feature stigmatizing and discriminatory nuances, although they do turn out to be the most used in scientific and legislative documentation [1,2], as well as in the media, which labels them as a problematic group with negative connotations, favoring hate speech [3–5]. Currently, the concept of “young people migrating alone” is considered less offensive [6].

Other studies define the changing and dynamic nature of this reality, describing the profile of these minors, the reasons that lead to migration, and the barriers encountered by them in the process of their inclusion in their host country [7–14]. Specifically, research that focuses on highlighting the challenges these minors face as they proceed to undertake the process for their inclusion in the host society is of great importance. Particularly noteworthy is their lack of schooling in their countries of origin, limited professional qualifications, and ignorance of Spanish [15–17]. However, the primordial role of these minors in their own process of social inclusion, through their empowerment, is also highlighted, thanks to their resilience and capacity for agency [18,19], in addition to their dreams and expectations as regards their migration [20].

In this process, the necessary coordination between different administrations to ensure compliance with regulations protecting the rights of these migrant children and young people emerges as an important factor [21,22]. Along the same lines, Save the Children and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2004) [23] stress the need for international protection for these minors, as well as their legal regulation [24], in addition to their protection in situations involving human trafficking [25].

In this regard, the role played by the public and private institutions that serve as the guardians of these minors and carry out different actions to support them, educationally and socially, until they come of age [7,26] is of the essence. This path is not devoid of contradictions and dilemmas for the different professionals involved, due to the two-fold nature of these minors as both “children to protect” and “foreigners to control” [27], p. 1. That is, they are both minors and also foreigners, such that the legal situation of migrants from outside the European Union, including minors, is governed by Royal Decree 629/2022 of July 26, amending the Regulation of the Organic Law 4/2000 on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration, after its reform by Organic Law 2/2009, approved by Royal Decree 557/2011 of April 20. The recent Reform of the Alien Regulation constitutes an important advance in the migratory regulations, also affecting minors, as it corrects some general migratory management dysfunctions, reordering the different procedures and instruments available [28].

With regard to the Community of Andalusia (Spain), Law 1/1998 of April 20, 1998, on the Rights and Care of Minors, is of special note. Specifically, article 23 establishes that the guardianship of unaccompanied minors in this territory lies with the Ministry of the Regional Government of Andalusia with competencies in this area. The welfare and care of minors who migrate alone are in the hands of the public system. Thus, the institutions charged with this work have become homes, where work is done on an individualized basis [29]. Protection centers, then, serve a dual purpose: on the one hand, to ensure the minors’ quality of life and, on the other, to promote their transition to adult life, seeking the socio-labor insertion of these young people [30–32].

However, according to several studies, the institutionalization of minors also has negative effects on their social and labor integration, highlighting both the difficulties and circumstances they face prior to their reception, as well as the often overlooked or underappreciated negative aspects of these protection centers [33–35]. Along the same lines, Markez and Pastor (2010) [36] point to overcrowding at them, hampering the individualized monitoring of each minor, as well as the disconnect between the activities centers offer and their users’ interests.

Rodríguez Gómez (2006) [37] points out that the protection system must prepare these minors to face their transitions to adult life through pedagogical and social tools that guarantee their social and professional inclusion. To achieve this objective, Ruiz et al. (2019) [38] indicate the importance of assessing the real needs and interests of the group and motivating them to continue with their education. In this regard, other authors under-score the lack of time at protection centers to address issues related to these minors’ transition to adult life, such as access to educational resources, socio-labor orientation, preparation for emancipation and autonomous life, and administrative resources to regulate their situation [32,39]. In turn, Cónsola (2016) [8] also emphasizes the need for comprehensive

training at protection centers, in addition to the need for a social network that connects the type of education offered with the possibilities of access to the labor market.

As mentioned above, the education of minors who migrate alone is framed within an inclusive model, though it is not without difficulties both inside and outside the classroom [40]. In this sphere of intervention, at the regulatory level, it is worth mentioning, firstly, the Law of 9/1999 of November 18, 1999, on Solidarity in Education, whose articles 17 and 18 state, respectively, that educational centers are to implement projects that favor respect for cultural identity, promote cooperation and the participation of migrant children in the social environment, and defend interculturality against rejection or discrimination. Second, Organic Law 3/2020 of December 29, amending Organic Law 2/2006 of May 3, on Education, adopts as its primary aim a focus on children's rights, as decreed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) [41]. Therefore, it recognizes, in section One "(a), of its only article "the best interest of the child, his or her right to education and the obligation of the State to ensure the effective fulfillment of his or her rights" (p. 13). Likewise, in paragraph one (a bis), it also refers to quality education and freedom from discrimination based on, among many other motives, racial, ethnic origin, geographical origin, age, religion, etc. Consequently, foreign minors traveling alone are to enjoy the same rights as any other minor.

The planning of socio-educational activities is not only the responsibility of protection centers but also of schools [42]. Therefore, migrant minors must remain in school, as per the pertinent regulations. It should be added, however, that these students, in most cases, are partially or totally unfamiliar with the language [9], making the presence of specific professionals in educational centers essential to facilitate the inclusion process through linguistic immersion; we are referring here to the Temporary Linguistic Adaptation Classrooms (ATAL), regulated by the Order of 15 January 2007, which regulates the measures and actions to be taken for the care of immigrant students and, especially, the Temporary Linguistic Adaptation Classrooms. This regulation establishes that the role of the professionals comprising the ATALs is to provide inclusive support, their main function being the teaching of the language and integration within the school, working collaboratively with the rest of the teaching staff. This resource, according to González et al. (2020) [43], often becomes the first meeting place for many minors arriving in Andalusia, so its function is to facilitate the acquisition of language skills for their full incorporation into the school environment in the shortest possible time. This learning process is carried out in a specific classroom, and the intervention of these professionals is of a transitory nature and should not be extended beyond two academic years, with a constant focus placed on educational inclusion. In addition, these professionals act as mediators between the students, their educators, and the school, monitoring the different subjects through curricular adaptations and reinforcement activities [43,44]. One of the main challenges cited by the European Commission (2019) [45] has been the training of teachers to meet the different challenges involved in the education of migrant minors. Thus, Zeichner (2010) [46] points out that it is essential that teachers be trained to promote the inclusion of these students, fight discrimination and intolerance, and help to implement inclusive methodologies that promote quality learning for all students. Therefore, teacher training is essential to run inclusive intercultural education programs that overcome the negative consequences of the low expectations held of these students [47].

Despite the aforementioned human and methodological resources, Arrufat and Sanz (2020) [48] point out that foreign students encounter other obstacles that also hinder the teaching-learning process. Their lack of fluent communication, both with teachers and the rest of the students, and cultural differences can generate certain conflicts, giving rise to situations of discrimination against them. Fernández-Simo et al. (2022) [49], meanwhile, also point out that "migrant youth do not perceive practical value in schoolwork, prioritizing non-formal training aimed at employment" (p. 14).

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Context and Objectives

The arrival of migrant minors from Africa to Europe has as its gateway mainly the south of Spain, specifically, the Canary Islands, Ceuta, Melilla, and Andalusia. The Immigrant Minor Support Program in the System for the Protection of Minors in Andalusia (SIME) provides support to unaccompanied immigrant minors of the Regional Government of Andalusia's Minor protection system, favoring their social integration through a specialized network of intercultural mediators.

In the case upon which this study focuses, it should be noted that the province of Cordoba (Spain) has come to be considered a site of good practices with regards to the procedures for processing migrant minors' residence permits, such that it has established itself as one of the destinations of interest for these minors to regularize their situations [50].

In line with these studies and based on the results obtained through funded research projects (Research project entitled 'Socio-educational intervention with unaccompanied foreign minors in the province of Cordoba (Spain)'—funded by the IV Galileo Innovation and Transfer Plan of the University of Cordoba, UCO-Social Innova modality of the University of Cordoba—and the project entitled 'Analysis of socio-educational intervention with unaccompanied migrant minors in the province of Cordoba: challenges for their socio-educational inclusion and transition to adult life (MEINCLUSO)—funded by the FEDER\_UCO call for proposals-), the work we present has the general objective of analyzing the process of socio-educational intervention for minors who migrate alone in the province of Cordoba (Spain). The aim is to gather the perceptions of the professionals who assist this group and those key aspects that can facilitate or hinder the social inclusion of these minors and their transitions to adult life.

### 2.2. Participants

This study adopts a qualitative approach, being descriptive/interpretive in nature. Specifically, a case study is conducted that integrates multiple units of analysis for an instrumental purpose [51]. Without aspiring to extrapolate the results, the study does "allow third parties in similar contexts to learn from the conclusions obtained from a specific case study" [52], p. 121.

The case study aims to approach and analyze the reality of the socio-educational intervention process for unaccompanied foreign minors in the province of Cordoba (Spain) from the perspective of the professionals working at the different public and private entities involved. In this research, an expert sampling approach has been adopted, and relevant cases have been considered [53] (Hernández-Sampieri y Mendoza, 2018). The sample of this research is composed of three profiles (see Table 1):

- (a) Profile 1: Professionals at Juvenile Protection Centers in the province of Cordoba (CPM).
- (b) Profile 2: Professionals in the educational field in the province of Cordoba (ED).
- (c) Profile 3: Professionals in the social sphere in the province of Cordoba (ONG).

The data collection instrument used was the semi-structured interview, considering the following dimensions:

- Dimension 1: Profile of MENAS
- Dimension 2: Integration of the MENAs in the CPMs
- Dimension 3: Relationships and coexistence inside and outside the center
- Dimension 4: Professional team in the CPM
- Dimension 5: Organization and resource management

Sixteen were conducted and transcribed verbatim for their subsequent coding and discourse analysis using Atlas ti v.9 software.

**Table 1.** Description of the sample.

| Field                          |      | Interviewees   |
|--------------------------------|------|--|
| Child Protection Centres (CPM) | CPM1 | Director   |
|                                | CPM2 | Director   |
|                                | CPM3 | Educator   |
|                                | CPM4 | Director   |
|                                | CPM5 | Educator   |
|                                | CPM6 | Director   |
|                                | CPM7 | Educator   |
| Education/formal               | ED1  | Government Delegate of Education                       |
|                                | ED2  | ATAL Teacher (Temporary Language Adaptation Classroom) |
|                                | ED3  | School Cuncelor  |
|                                | ED4  | ATAL Teacher (Temporary Language Adaptation Classroom) |
| Social                         | ONG1 | Responsible for the literacy program                   |
|                                | ONG2 | Career Guidance  |
|                                | ONG3 | Head of the organization                               |
|                                | ONG4 | Specialist   |
|                                | ONG5 | Specialist   |

### 3. Results

The incorporation of migrant minors in different institutional settings is analyzed from the perspective of professionals belonging to the social and educational spheres of formal and non-formal centers and entities, specifically, secondary schools, protection centers, and NGOs. Based on the language found in the interviews analyzed, the most relevant findings are presented below, organized into different themes: (a) the complexity of the inclusion process; (b) professional expectations regarding the minors' educational and labor development; (c) facilitation strategies in socio-educational intervention; (d) the importance of coordination between professionals.

#### 3.1. The Complexity of the Socio-Educational Inclusion Process for Minors in the Institutional Sphere

In general, the participants believe that the process of incorporating minors into the different institutions responsible for their care is satisfactory:

*"There is usually a lot of respect for the rules of the center, there are usually not many problems, discipline problems, they follow the rules quite well"* (E\_ED3).

*"They adapt well, and they are well accepted by the Spaniards, I didn't think so, but... they are very well accepted"* (E\_CPM3).

However, sometimes this process can be challenging:

*"It is a very stressful job. . . so you work with urgency, working with urgency is not the same as working on a daily basis, I organize. . . I bring a schedule every day and I rarely . . . comply with that schedule. . ."* (E\_CPM1).

and not devoid of difficulties owing, mainly, to the minors' backgrounds:

*"The rules, in principle, there are some who accept them very well and others. . . well. . . they have a harder time ( . . . ) because there are children who come, for example, from being on the street and then, well, maybe they cross the Strait. . . maybe two months on the street. . . living on the street, not at home, but on the street"* (E\_CPM3).

*" . . . I think that they take from our society, from our culture, what is really of interest to them, what they are not interested in they won't take, it's very difficult for them to integrate, to adapt, to integrate into our society; in fact, very few of them have Spanish friends"* (E\_CPM5).

### 3.2. Expectations of Professionals Regarding Migrant Minors' Educational and Professional Development

The expectations of the professionals regarding the inclusion of minors in the dynamics of the institution and society in general tend to be disparate, affecting, to a large extent, their way of conceiving the educational and professional futures of these young people. Thus, we find professionals who recognize the great capacity for resilience and adaptation of these adolescents and young people as they face a totally different context and culture:

*"The MENAs come with many basic needs. The first thing is the language; there is a barrier there, which is hard for us, especially at the beginning, although they are very smart, as they quickly learn much better than us, and delve into our culture"* (E\_CPM2).

*"Most of them come to look for a better life, a better future. They come to look for education, they come to look for work, they come with a tremendous interest in learning and training and in assimilating another vision and another world. In fact, you can see how many children evolve and adapt"* (E\_CPM2).

Similarly, the group of minors is conceived as a group that is not conflictive in the institutional context:

*"They don't give us problems. They are not kids with behavioral problems. . . in my experience at the centers where I have been"* (E\_ED1).

*"There is usually a lot of respect for the rules of the center, there are usually not many discipline problems, they follow the rules quite well. . ."* (E\_ED3).

However, of note are the low academic expectations that the professionals have of these young people:

*"I was a tutor in the first intake of the two, and their academic tutor there at the high school told me that they would even have the possibility of finishing ESO (Obligatory Secondary Education), although the advisable thing, it was said that the possibility of basic vocational training was the most advisable thing. . ."* (E\_CPM1).

*" . . . I don't know if they will continue studying, I want to send them to school this year, because one is doing gardening at IES (Secondary School) XXX; another is doing carpentry at XXX, and they are doing very well because they get good grades and everything ( . . . ) They are schooled as much as possible, so that they are not idle here. . . Because, as they are already "lazy," they can't be here all morning lying around or with their cell phones. . ."* (E\_CPM4).

*" . . . these students require a psycho-pedagogical evaluation because they are compensatory students. . . so what is recommended is that the counselor evaluate and determine their level of curricular competence, which will be very low. . ."* (E\_ED1).

In the discourse of professionals, a recurrent thought that limits and confines the formative development of adolescents and young people to the field of basic vocational training is identified:

*"When they arrive without the language and at those ages, 15–16 years old, and you put them in a lower grade. . . a young person who does not know the language, who has not been in school before. . . cannot complete an ordinary ESO (Obligatory Secondary Education) because it is very curricular, so it is impossible, so either a basic vocational training, if they meet the age and well. . . if they meet the age and some minimum criteria. . . you have no other options. . ."* (E\_ED1).

One of the participants is aware of these low expectations and expresses it as follows:

*"The kids come here and they want to go to college. And they say: 'no, no, no. . . you're in a juvenile center. What you have to do is a vocational training course to become a carpenter', but maybe they don't want to study that, maybe they want to go to university to study medicine"* (E\_ONG1).

*“My father put me on a patera to come to Spain because I wanted to study’, from the first day he told me, and now he’s a nurse. So let’s give them the opportunity for them to say yes. We have to guide, we have to decide, but they have to know all the options, because if we think they all come here to work, are we going to train them all as waiters? Let’s see what they need. . .” (E\_ONG1).*

### 3.3. Strategies to Facilitate Socio-Educational Intervention

The socio-educational intervention with migrant minors is based on a wide range of well-defined procedures and strategies that allow for comprehensive and individualized support for them, guaranteeing their rights:

*“Yes, when a minor arrives, the first thing we do is [tell them that] we have rights and duties, and then those rights and duties are given to the child, in writing, we keep a copy. In those rights and duties, we say. . . the rules are written there. . . they are told that the minor has the right to housing, has the right to food, has the right to a doctor, has the right to clothing, has the right to education. . . well, and we are there to help them and, of course, they also have some duties, some obligations, so the obligations are also conveyed. . . they have schedules, they have rules. . . schedules regarding entering, eating, leaving, cleaning and the dining room too, and then they also have a discipline in terms of their education. . .” (E\_CPM3).*

In the different institutional environments, there are protocols and procedures governing the stay of the minor. In the formal educational context, different resources stipulated in the legislation are implemented to respond to the diversity of needs involved: the ATAL classrooms, Therapeutic Pedagogy classrooms, educational reinforcement, Reception Plan, Academic Reinforcement, Guidance Program, etc. All of them are complemented, in turn, by resources and materials developed by the professionals over the years:

*“. . . the resource is that teacher, that teacher in the Temporary Linguistic Adaptation Classroom (ATAL) where they work on Spanish, the Spanish language, which is the vehicle for integration. . . They also advise the teachers regarding the linguistic adaptation materials, how to work with them. . . then the center also. . . when they call us, we advise them on what measures and how to organize all this at the center. . .for example, the reinforcements, the support, how to organize them. . . how to work with them. . . even with specific resources, such as the Therapeutic Pedagogy teacher, if it has to be linked to a psycho-pedagogical evaluation and a psycho-pedagogical evaluation report. . .” (E\_ED1).*

*“Everyone, in all the departments, the teaching staff already has materials, because they come every year, they already have materials prepared, and, if they don’t, they look for them, with the ATAL, to give them material” (E\_ED3).*

### 3.4. Learning to Coordinate: A Key Issue in Support for Minors

The professionals participating in the study point out the importance of good coordination, both internally and between institutions, in order to achieve more comprehensive care for unaccompanied minors. Along these lines, they call for greater regulation, one that would enhance understanding, in the different areas, of the actions undertaken:

*“. . .we need some guidelines, some coordination protocols between institutions because the problem is not only educational: it is a social problem, it is a labor problem (. . .) we need to further define this inter-institutional coordination between protection, education and, well. . . to regulate it more and not depend on self-initiative” (E\_ED1).*

*“Every day we are finding at the high schools, at the elementary schools, personnel who are more committed to helping them as well. In terms of relationships with other protection centers, we should establish a better collaboration network in order to be able to unify criteria and action guidelines, etc.” (E\_CPM6).*

In this way, more personalized support would be achieved, tailored to the needs and demands of each minor and guarantee follow-up:



*“Well, having a contact person, practically daily (. . .) So, in order to be able to work with them at the educational level, it is necessary to have constant contact and to see. . . talk to the children, to know that the person who is working with them is in contact with the center” (E\_ONG1).*

The messages evidence a wide network of professional connections that is restricted, to a large extent, to each of the institutional settings (formal education and protection centers) and is mainly determined by their different idiosyncrasies. This is how it is described by the protection centers:

*“When we have to do something important together, for example, tomorrow. . . it is organized by the Service and we get together and talk a lot with the three [protection] centers, the three directors talk a lot, the technical team, the worker and the psychologist also talk a lot with their colleagues from the other centers. In other words, communication is continuous between the three centers, and with the Service. Then we also have meetings with the centers and with the guardianship units, and with the Service Head to coordinate many problems of the minors, to see how each child’s case is coming along” (E\_CPM2).*

In the case of educational institutions, coordination depends on the organizational and operational structure of the centers, facilitating the delimitation of the functions of each of the professionals while at the same time limiting their autonomy and initiative:

*“The truth is that I do it through the counselor at the center, sometimes I have had contact with a tutor, but not usually. Normally the one who talks to the foster homes and others is the counselor of the center. . . well, I tell her what I want to know “look at this minor to see if you can determine what their problem is,” and she is the one who is in charge of calling them, and when I return they call me and say “I’ve contacted them, this is what is going on, don’t worry. . .” (E\_ED2).*

In this regard, appeals are made to the professionals to carry out coordination tasks on a voluntary basis:

*“It is easy to coordinate because we see each other all day long. Well, and also, the attitude we have is one of coordination. We can see each other all day long, and not want to coordinate” (E\_ED3).*

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

The results of this study reveal a group of professionals who are aware of the complexity of the process of integrating minors who migrate alone. As explained by Durán and Muñoz (2020) [3], this complexity is due to, among other factors, the dual status of the subjects in question, who are objects of protection and, at the same time, control, which places them in a process of triple vulnerability: minors without family/adult references, migrants, and having irregular or uncertain administrative situations that limit their access to basic social rights.

Coinciding with the contributions of Vilá-Baños et al. (2022) [54], the participants in this study express the need to take into account, when designing and developing social and educational intervention proposals, the harsh experiences endured by these adolescent and young migrants. In the same vein, they point to the great heterogeneity of the group, characterized by a wide and diverse range of needs and interests. Then there is the attention that must be paid to daily, unforeseen events [55]. Hernández-Hernández et al. (2021) [56] specify some of these needs: being able to guarantee similar educational achievements for all students of both migrant and non-migrant origin, and promoting policies for the incorporation of minors who migrate alone in both the educational and social systems so that they can achieve the same educational objectives as the rest of the students.

The participants’ contributions, as socio-educational intervention professionals, bring to light different expectations with regards the future of these migrant minors. The group is recognized as highly resilient and with a great capacity for agency, which accords with the results of recent research [3,54]. Thus, the behavior of the minors is generally considered



unproblematic, in contrast to common public perceptions of the group, based on the control and regulation of immigration rather than on children's rights [57]. However, some interviewees express low expectations of the minors, fundamentally in the academic sphere, in line with what was observed by Montserrat et al. (2013) [58]. These authors report that these young people in residential care lag behind in their educational plans, associating this fact with factors such as the low expectations of the professionals involved and the failure to prioritize the minors' formal schooling. Along these lines, the expectations of young people in their migratory process should also be considered. The study by Segú Odriozola et al. (2023) [20] observes that the group in question often considers academic training as something secondary, a circumstantial activity present in their lives, in many cases, only to enable them to find a job. Fernández-Simo et al. (2022) [49] express that migrant minors prioritize their efforts to access the labor market quickly and effectively, entailing that the economic component takes priority over continuing their education in the medium or long term. Although the formal education system implements specific policies and resources for educational support, it does not always have the positive results expected, giving rise to situations of social vulnerability.

With regard to socio-educational intervention strategies, the participants in the study highlight their work of comprehensive support for minors in different institutional settings, in line with that indicated by different studies [30,32,44]. Resources for the care of minors are put in place, particularly the use of protocols that follow the recommendations issued by different studies [26,59]. In this way, the protection system guarantees the rights of minors, assessing their educational needs in an individualized and progressive manner [7]. Along the same lines, Rodríguez Izquierdo (2022) [47] points out the need for "appropriate support, given their personal circumstances and personal development, and in accordance with their age, particularly in the case of adolescent students" (p. 339).

Finally, the findings of this study stress coordination between professionals as a key aspect affecting the social and labor inclusion of migrant minors, confirming the conclusions of studies such as that by Alonso (2021) [55], who emphasizes the importance of collaboration between different agents in the territory for more comprehensive action. Similarly, the work of Grands, Burns, and Lucas (2022) [60] underlines the fundamental role of collaboration and the commitment of professionals in their interventions with minors who migrate alone. These authors endorse the development of communities of professional practices [61] for those responsible for different areas of intervention, ensuring that resources—information, advice, and expertise—are shared as effectively as possible.

We are aware of some limitations of this study. Among them, the difficulty of accessing the discourse of minors due to the restrictions of the protection system stands out. Nevertheless, the research continues a line of work with young people who have been taken out of care, which complements the results of this study. On the other hand, more specific intervention strategies should continue to be developed in different areas, such as, for example, the passage of these young people through educational institutions.

As new lines of research, we propose, firstly, to describe the transition process to adulthood of these minors who migrate alone and, specifically, the support programs for young people in foster care. Second, in line with the work of Norton et al. (2023) [62] and Alarcón Galindo (2022) [63], it would be fruitful to delve into aspects related to the psychological well-being of minors who migrate alone, specifically the different psychological care programs as well as those interventions—focused mainly on mental health, stress induced by the trauma of the migration process, anxiety, and uncertainty—that may have positive effects on this process.

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