

## Preparing for *leaving*



### Hey there!

It was great receiving the e-mail with all your doubts and anxieties.

**We also recall feeling such a great happiness, but at the same time, sadness and fear when we were about to leave.**

We're so happy because we are finally about to be free! Independence! I don't know... Being able to make our own choices without idle opinion.

But we are also sad because at the Home we had food, education, friends and we were safe... At the Home we are in a sort of bubble, right? We feel protected, but we don't know what awaits us in the world, out there.

Can I tell you something? I think that while you are in the Home, **you can start preparing for the moment of leaving**. Any time someone mentions the life project, be alert and take part of it. Participate! **The life project will help you think about the future**, about what you want for yourself and how you can achieve your dreams and aims.

If someone asks you to participate in activities at the Home that may help you **develop social skills - Go for it!**

Yeah, we know, social skills....here we go again, using words that make no sense... But, plainly speaking, "social skills" is an expression used to learn **what we need to know in order to use the freedom that we will feel once we are out there**. Skills also mean all the tools we need to search for information; to invest in education; to acknowledge the importance of taking care of ourselves and our health, and not giving up when faced with challenges. Once we leave, it's important to know the unexpected: how to use an atm card, to manage money, or even, how to fill an income tax form. Those are all skills.

**Before you leave, it is important to ensure a safe place to live**. Don't forget **to finish your education**. When we were in the Home, we didn't care about school. But afterwards we realized that it is very important. You can go to university and study for a higher degree or you can attend a professional course. Whichever the path you choose, finish it in order to find a job and achieve all the independence you seek.

Once you're about to leave the Home, you'll think that you won't be able to do it all by yourself; you might struggle with the silence, but everything will go away. As we said before, it is only natural to feel sad or dissatisfied. These feelings overwhelm us when we face great challenges in life, and if such feelings upset your life, you should have someone to talk to.

Don't forget that your counsellor will be there for you even when you leave.

**Ask for help whenever you need.**

And we are here as well,

Ana, Jaime e Joana





How?



# Preparing for leaving care

**SUPPORTS** SUPPORTS - Supporting children in the delicate phase between adolescence and adulthood while leaving alternative care facilities.

SUPPORTS is a transnational project involving a partnership of 3 countries from the European Union - Bulgaria, Portugal and Italy - which join forces in order to develop comprehensive care for children leaving residential institutions. The main goal of the project is to create skills in teams of professionals working in the protection system and the CRC for holistic approach to child as a preliminary step towards the development and implementation of sustainable follow-up plans. The project focusses to promote the participation of children hosted in residential care facilities regarding decisions about their actual and future conditions.

If you need more information about your rights as a child you can contact:



**BULGARIA**  
PULSE Foundation  
[www.pulsfoundation.org](http://www.pulsfoundation.org)



**ITALY**  
Defence for Children  
International Italia  
[www.defenceforchildren.it](http://www.defenceforchildren.it)



**PORTIGAL**  
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