



**GIRLS
& BOYS
TOWN**

Healing Heartbroken Children

**UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG
& GIRLS & BOYS TOWN SA
INVITES YOU TO THE NEXT
CARE-LEAVING PRACTICE FORUM**



When: 22 October 2025, 10:00 - 12:30

Where: Nokuphila School, 59 Steyn Rd, President Park AH, Midrand
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/611C4g2aFKzmaCPM6>
In the Music Hall

RSVP: By 14 October 2025 by completing this form
<https://forms.gle/woRLkHsCVYep1ixv6>

What: Employment pathways for care-leavers in South Africa
(Prof Adrian D. van Breda)

Transitioning from alternative care into young adulthood is a challenge for many care-leavers. Access to employment is one of their key milestones, but research shows that care-leavers struggle more than age-equivalent youth without care experience to acquire and maintain employment. However, research on the enablers of and barriers to employment for care-leavers is relatively scarce.

Data will be presented on the enablers and barriers to acquiring and maintaining employment. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 62 care-leavers, aged 15–27, from Girls and Boys Town South Africa. Enablers of acquiring work included mobilizing or creating networks, receiving support from the childcare agency, and job chaining, while barriers included personal issues, incomplete education, and COVID-19. Enablers of maintaining work included personal determination and interpersonal skills, while barriers included negative behaviour, poor salaries and working conditions, and COVID-19.

In addition, data will be presented regarding the employment pathways, drawing on another 34 Girls and Boys Town care-leavers. Three core employment components emerged from the analysis: focus, sustainability and progression. Using these components, four employment pathways were constructed: stalling, hatching, advancing and cooking. In most cases, participants could not show a purposeful employment pathway. Recommendations relate to improved employment planning prior to leaving care and linking care-leavers to employment guidance after leaving care, with a view to facilitating a more steady and purposeful work progression, leading towards financial security.



Adrian van Breda is Professor of Social Work at the University of Johannesburg. He is the leading resilience social work scholar and the leading care-leaving scholar in Africa. He has supervised several PhDs on leaving care. He has numerous publications and international conference presentations on leaving care. He was the Chair of International Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood from Care. He has a long partnership with GBTSA.