

PROJECTS ABROAD ARGENTINA

LAW & HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT



Volunteer Geeske Bouius swimming with the girls from orphanage Soaje.

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NEW STAFF PRESENTATION

ARMANDO “LALO” ACOSTA LERA

Hi there!

The Law & Human Rights Office was looking forward to find a lawyer, one with enthusiasm and passion about justice, and fortunately for all of us they found me. I'm joking a little, but it's just to make you smile dear reader. ;)



I count 27 summers that passed by on my skin, roughly 26 birthday's cakes, lot of nights among friends, happiness and love in the right measure, about 800 soccer matches watched, a few series, a couple of favorite things stickied like tattoos into my soul.

And what bring me here? Well, I think that Projects found me and, at the same time, I found them. I believe that we as humans can make a change with small actions on a day by day basis but Projects allow us to do more, we can team-up to bring opportunities to the people. And that's what all this is about.

On this month of work I found amazing people. Volunteers , work companions, people all over the world an all united by the same goal: doing the most out of our skills to get the Human Rights respected while we are having a great time.

I think we are making that awareness of the human dignity that the world needs a tangible thing, a right fulfill, a problem solved and an another human happiness, happiness reveled on the smile that they give in return. So I was tell to write a presentation and this is the best I could make with almost no time.

You can find me on different social media platforms, i'm Lalo Acosta Lera, my email is acostalera@projects-abroad.org and I'm making things happen on Argentina. I hope you're having a great time while reading this. And, if you are coming to work with us or already have been working here then we are bros on spirit.

Farewell, my friend!

Lalo

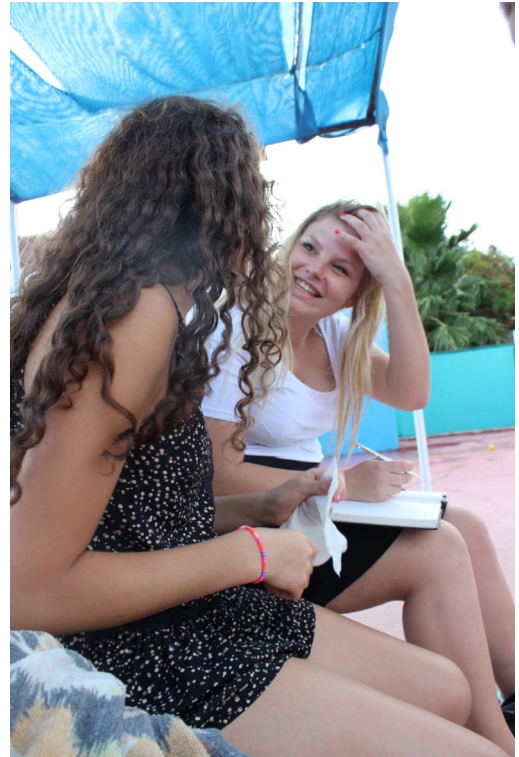
ARTICLES

SOAJE AND QUISQUISCATE

Swimming with the girls by *Geeske Bouius*

Quisquiscate and Soaje both are institutions for young troubled girls. These girls have, for reasons such as abuse, poverty and abandonment, been taken away from their home and family and placed in this institution. Our aim is to provide activities and opportunities for the girls to live “normal lives” as kids, and conduct human rights education programs to empower the girls.

During my stay in Córdoba it was summer time and therefore we took the girls to the swimming pool! The staff of the pool organized all sorts of activities for them, like playing ball and a swimming lesson. The girls had a lot of fun and so did we. It is great to see that you can make them smile and feel good about themselves, even if this is just for a little while. Although the girls do tend to be aggressive and mean from time to time, with a lot of patience and kindness, you can gain their trust and you will find out that they are actually really lovely.



For me, it was a valuable experience to work with the young girls. I learnt a lot from them, It broadened my horizons in a certain way. I hope they liked my visits and maybe learnt a little bit from me as well.

FOUNDATION GANAS

Article on protocols to help people receive national pensions

In placements like Ganas or Blas Pascal we find people that need for disability pensions, they can't work and they live in very bad conditions or even in the streets. What we do is helping this people to start the procedure for applying for this kind of pensions, that requests a 75% of disability. In this moment we have two cases that we can't close because the entire procedure takes a lot of time and even when all the documents are ready people have to wait 7-8 months to receive money.

What we practically do is joining people in every phase of the procedure, in particular: go with them to get a blank sheet, go to their hospital and search for their doctor to fill in the certificate of disability and come back to the first office to complete the sheet and start the request.

If the person who's asking for the pension doesn't have any reference hospital or doctor – it means that he/she never checked his/her health condition – we have to go with them to a public hospital to do some analysis or tests and wait for the results as the doctor could establish the percentage of disability.

Another kind of pension we can help to apply for is the pension for mother with 7 or more children. We just closed a case for a woman that had to get the blank sheet and present the birth certificates of all her 7 children. Now she's waiting for the pension.

CECAM

CeCam is a prison for young girls that have committed criminal acts. It can be committing murder or stealing. The girls have a schedule for every day that they have to follow. As a volunteer at this placement you will be signed to do activities with the girls. It is important to conclude activities that have something to do with self-esteem. Usually there will be about 5 girls but it really depends.

Because of the girls have to follow their schedule it can be difficult sometimes to do activities. It is possible that one or two of the girls has to clean or do something that the guardian tells them to do in the middle of the activity.

Therefore it is always good to have different kinds of activities so you are prepared for anything. If you are a new volunteer the girls doesn't talk too much. They don't have the rights that they are suppose to have so they don't have the best view on themselves because they don't feel respected. Even though the girls have committed crimes doesn't mean that they are evil or dangerous. Some of the girls commit crimes because they don't have another choice. This makes them survivors not psychopathic. They have to be punished because of breaking the law but they are still human beings.

Especially at CeCam they really love to do some activities with their hands. They love to be creative and then get some credit.

Though we have been doing a lot of physical activities about self-esteem and trust issue. We divided the girls in groups and then they had to test each other by one leading the other with covered eyes.

We have also prepared a Danish dessert that didn't need any tools just the ingredients, a table and a lot of hands. They really enjoyed it because it was something that they had not tried before. The girls are really likable and I hope for the future volunteers to have a great time with them.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR LAW & HUMAN RIGHTS

By Sif Nielsen-Lundberg

A strategic plan is something every firm has, or at least should have in place. The strategic plan for the Law and Human Rights office is of course a little more interesting than other strategic plans. This plan lays out how to work with human rights and, by doing that, how we will be helping people.

Simone and I have been working on the new strategic plan for the next 3 years at the Human Rights Office.

This has been quite an assignment. When we were asked if we could make the strategic plan for the next 3 years for the human Rights office--our answer was of course we could.



Volunteer Grant Siemens and Lalo our Legal Assistant, working at our Legal Clinic in Blas Pascal.

That's the spirit about the Human Rights Office in Argentina--"of course we can!" To work with human rights requires a lot of patience, passion for what you do, and not being afraid of having big ambitions.

The first thing we need to know before making a strategic plan, is why it even matters for the Projects-Abroad Human Rights Office to have one.

We find it important to give Projects-Abroad a long term direction, and enable partners, staff, volunteers and stakeholders to give them a better understanding of which direction we want to go. Also to reflect back on what had made an impact in the past and learning from that experience.

When you make a strategic plan, it's like seeing the big picture for the future; We need to make priorities and decide where it is important to focus our energy and resources in the future, to maximise its potential for achieving our mission.

So far, so good. But how do you make a strategic plan? First, you have to ask yourself: "In what ways can we realize our vision?", and "How is it possible to shorten a vision for an organization working with human rights?" How do we take our ambitious main vision ("Helping every person who needs us in Cordoba") and say it in a way that doesn't intimidate people.

I Think We Got it: "The Law & Human Rights office aims to achieve a real social impact and positive growth within institutions, vulnerable communities, and individuals. This impact will be reached through an organized and well-planned course of action; as well as through responsible teamwork between staff, communities, stakeholders, NGO's, foreign volunteers and the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the intervention."

We started our research. What is a strategic plan? If you look up the word "strategic" in a dictionary it says: "the relationship between resources and goals". Henry Mintzberg, an inspirational thinker when it comes to organizations theory, says that it is impossible to define the word 'Strategic'.

So where to start....? First, we started off by asking Vicky, the woman who knows the most about the Human Rights Office in Argentina for a meeting. Our meetings with her would last hours be-

cause both Simone and I always had countless questions. (Not to mention the three of us were in the same room, sharing the same passions. It was a good thing that the office closes at 5pm.) Simone and I were able to get a lot of answers to our questions during those long meetings. We created an analysis for each placement that we visited. The type of analysis we used was SWOT analysis which identifies the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of each placement. We discussed what Projects-Abroad had been doing with the placements in the past to help us gain a better understanding of the methods that were used in the past two years.

The SWOT analysis created structure and overview of Projects-Abroad's strengths and competitive position by focusing on the above four categories. To get a better understanding of the placements, we organized two interviews so we could meet the people in charge of the programs and get some "inside knowledge". It is always a privilege to meet people who have devoted their careers to something they really enjoy doing and find important.

The first interview was with G.A.N.A.S, an ONG, or as you would say in English a non-governmental organization or NGO. Twice a week (Tuesdays & Thursdays), G.A.N.A.S. brings free meals to the homeless, unemployed, or people who are in other difficult situations. G.A.N.A.S also partners with corporations to gather things like school supplies, clothes etc.

If anyone here in Córdoba know the homeless people, it's the people working for G.A.N.A.S. The second interview was with two people who work for an organization called Cuento Con Vos. They used to work with G.A.N.A.S but because they often met people who had bigger problems during their time with G.A.N.A.S, they decided to start an organization to help people with these "bigger problems".

We left each interview with a little more knowledge and a better feeling than before the interview started. Now we have a little more created knowledge to make a strategic plan, but we also got the impression that there is so much to do. It is clear that there is no one part of the strategic plan that is going to be easy to implement and not one point in the strategic plan is going to be easy to put into practice, while all this is just for one of the placements.

No one ever said it would be easy to work with Human Rights. Therefore, it is important to have a Strategic Plan. It will take a lot of hard work and dedication, but if we were asked if the new Strategic Plan for the Law and Human Rights will be a success, the answer would be in the spirit of the human rights office: Of course it will.