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■ Quisqui

During May and June we have been working with different aspects of life with the girls at Quisqui. In May we worked on the issue of respect and being able to see a situation from another person's perspective. It's important for the girls to realise how their actions can affect others, especially if they don't respect other people. We also did some exercises on the issue of accepting change. Since the girls have so many changes in their life, it's important that they realise that it's not necessarily a bad thing.

During the two months, the girls have grown a lot, both physically and mentally. The group of girls seems closer and you can see that they all care about each other. You can also feel a change in them, and see that they are being open to new possibilities.



Projects Abroad Human Rights volunteers participate in march protesting violence against women in Cordoba, Argentina.



Projects Abroad Human Rights volunteers group hold up sign at march protesting violence against women in Cordoba, Argentina.

■ Ni Una Menos

In recent years, Argentina has seen increased violence and crimes against women. The tipping point for the country to take a stand was the death of a 14-year-old pregnant girl, possibly at the hands of her boyfriend and his family. This event, along with the history of oppression, prompted communities all over Argentina to take a stand.

Thousands of people took to the streets to participate in a march, "Ni Una Menos", in the hope that not one more woman will be killed due to femicide. Additionally, people want the lives of previous victims to no longer be hidden by governments. People marched all over Argentina and in neighbouring countries, such as Uruguay and Chile. There are also now calls for the government to keep official records in order for the full extent of femicide in the country to be gathered. Many citizens of Argentina voice their concerns that this isn't just a political issue, but a cultural one as well. Many Latin American countries face a culture that oppresses women, and that will no longer be tolerated.

There was a march held in Cordoba and Projects Abroad saw it as the perfect opportunity for our volunteers to experience this city in its purest form, unified and together. There were men, women and children from all races and backgrounds coming together to fight for peace and justice. It was an amazing sight to see. It is easy to feel lost in a big city for volunteers, especially if you don't speak the language or understand the culture. The Ni Una Menos march bridged that gap by showing that regardless of language or culture, all women should be respected, valued, protected, and advocated for under the law. It was empowering to experience this movement, and it has brought upon a wave of hope and power to women everywhere.

■ Freire and Medio Camino

Projects Abroad is involved in a project called Freire. It is a centre for young men who have had trouble with the law and have been sent there by request. Projects Abroad members

are attempting to form relationships with the young men and discuss things that have happened in their past, plans for their future, and anything that they want to talk about. There are problems at the programme that we are trying to help with. The projects are disorganised and can be confusing. We are working with them to create more activities for the centre. The experience at Freire is fulfilling and looking ahead, we can see the possibility of growth and impact. Our relationship with the men in Freire is improving and we are excited to see what happens in the future.

Medio Camino is a new project for us. It is a half-way house where boys can stay while they try to find jobs. The age group ranges from 12-18 years old. Projects Abroad is trying to discuss possibilities for the future of them. Our goals are to help the boys communicate with one another and to give them confidence. We are trying to encourage the boys to use teamwork to accomplish things and give them the ambition to pursue their own goals in the future.

JULIETTE AESCHLIMANN – VOLUNTEER, FRANCE

My name is Juliette and I am a 16-year-old volunteer who worked with the Law and Human Rights projects for two months. During those two months, I worked a lot with people in difficult situations whom I met when we worked with Fundacion GANAS, an organisation that feeds the homeless and gives them clothes. They also needed help with obtaining a physical ID, getting a pension and legal assistance.

■ Helping the Homeless get an ID

In Argentina, everyone has an ID number that is made up of eight digits and they should have a physical ID card too. Argentinians need this ID card to get a job, visit the doctor, buy a house and so on. With the help of the Law and Human Rights team, we were able to put together a procedure to get a free ID for the homeless or for people in difficult situation. We have a contact in the municipal government that can get them a certificate so that they can get their IDs for free.



Projects Abroad Human Rights volunteer interviews a homeless man in order to try and help him get a pension and ID card

■ Helping the Homeless get a Pension

When we interviewed some homeless people, we noticed that a few of them suffered from various illnesses or disabilities and that they weren't able to get a pension. We have a contact at the Ministry of the Social Development that can give us a certificate that needs to be filled in by the person in a public hospital. Once they have done this, they can go back and talk to a social worker in order to get a pension.

■ Tortured Client

One night at GANAS, I interviewed a man who told me he had been tortured during the past dictatorship and that he had never gotten recognition from it. He said he was tortured at D2 in September 1975 and that when he tried to get recognition for the first time, he was mistreated. He is 61 years old and up to this day he had never officially been a victim. We called the centre of assistance to victims of Human Rights violations, which delegated the case to Cordoba.

The woman working in Cordoba explained to us that there are two types of pension for being illegally detained and tortured, one for each day that they have been tortured and one for life. To get the pension is a long process, but the client will be able to get 8000 pesos per month for life. He called us yesterday, shouting that "we won" because he was finally recognised as a victim. His family called and told us it helped him a lot and that they were all very grateful. Even though it is not over, we have already gotten far and I am very proud of what we have accomplished.

EMILY SHEPARD – VOLUNTEER, USA

What an eventful few months it has been in Cordoba! My name is Emily Shepard, I am a volunteer from the United States and I've been working in the Law & Human Rights office for the past two and half months. As many of you already know, one of the main tasks our office is involved with is working with different institutions for young people within the community. Two of these placements are called Soaije and Cecam. Soaije is a government home for girls ages 8-14 who have been forcibly removed from their families due to unhealthy environments. Cecam is a correctional facility for young female offenders. At home in the US, I work with vulnerable persons in the legal field and am trained to work with people in any type of traumatic criminal/familial setting.

■ Soaije and Cecam

When we work with each of our community partners, our goal is to create friendships whilst educating our participants about healthy choices and their human rights. Our objective for Soaije and Cecam for the past few weeks has been to teach the girls about violence. Because of my experience, I have taken the lead on organising the violence curriculum and our team has covered physical, verbal, and domestic violence. Violence is not a foreign concept for any of these young women, throughout their lives they have either been the victim, witness, or perpetrator of all sorts of harm.

Creating activities that are fun and constructive with such an intense topic can be quite a challenge but thankfully, all of the girls were very interested. The most memorable workshop we had was our first week of the series where we discussed physical violence. The girls at Cecam were so engaged, it was incredible to be a part of! We discussed all types of physical violence and brainstormed with the girls about the consequences of violence for their lives, their families' lives, and the world. We brought a poster and on one side, we wrote all of the consequences down and on the other we wrote down ways that we could prevent ourselves from perpetrating violence. We talked about alternatives when situations escalate, like taking a walk, talking with a friend, journaling, etc. It was wonderful to see how comfortable they were sharing with us and they asked us personal questions about times that we engaged in or dealt with violence. It was critical to our success that the girls see that it isn't "perfect teachers" versus "bad violent teens", but that at some point in our lives we have all dealt with this issue.

The following weeks, we worked with the girls on verbal and domestic violence and I have seen first-hand how it has made them think critically. During the domestic violence week, we explained the cycle of violence, the power and control wheel, which explains behaviours of abusers and how domestic violence escalates. Many of these girls have watched domestic violence between their parents or been in an abusive relationship themselves, so it was wonderful to watch as they received the words to explain the horror they've endured.

Though we know violence is a deeply-rooted issue taught by years of conditioning, we believe discussing violence has opened the door for these girls to explore alternatives. We stand in hope that they will remember our friendship and take the steps necessary to eradicate violence from their lives.