

Monthly Report – August 2015

Projects Abroad Human Rights Office, Cape Town

Social Justice Project Updates

Vredelus Huis / Bonnytoun / Lindelani

Workshop one and two - Being a Role Model

This is one of the workshops we make a habit of doing as often as possible

Young individuals, including adults model the behaviour of someone they perceive as a role model, be it someone who positively or negatively influence their lives.

It is impediment that the boys and girls at the juvenile facilities learn to distinguish between a positive and negative role model, and therefore this particular workshop was done today, to educate them on what a role model is and what qualities to look for in such a person.

We created an informative, interactive slide show presentation, which included: explaining the term "role model", the difference between a positive and negative role model, what qualities to look for in a role model, the reasons as to why this person is your role model and how their actions/behaviour impacts their life.

We also divided the volunteers and inmates into groups, in order to have group discussions on how the inmates can use their past experiences and current situation to impact the lives of others in a positive way as well as be a role model for their peers.

This workshop also gave the boys and girls the opportunity to consciously think about what they wanted for their future and how they would use their past experience to positively affect their lives.

At the end of the workshop we asked the boys and girls questions, such as "do you feel like you have learned anything during today's workshop?" and "do you want to be considered a positive role model for your peers?". The feedback we received were "I have learned to recognise my past mistakes and use it as fuel to motivate myself to be better and have a better and brighter future" and "yes, I want to be a positive role model, but not only for my peers, but I want to be proud of myself for making a difference".

"I believe the first step of changing is recognising your mistakes and those who can openly speak about it, have already taken the first step in making positive changes. The workshop was also really well received and for the boys and girls self-reflection is going to lead to even more positive changes". – Sean Tanner

We concluded the workshop with a quotation by the late Nelson Mandela *“For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”*

Khayelitsha

A few weeks ago we received a call from Siyakathala regarding a 17 year old boy who was addicted to a commonly used drug known as "Tik". The boy was seeking assistance with getting into a rehabilitation centre as he wanted to stop using drugs and be able to positively influence his friends and siblings.

A few days later, a woman who also works for Siyakathala also approached us seeking assistance with her younger brother, who was also battling a drug addiction.

We then researched different rehabilitation centres in the surrounding areas, as well as contacted the City of Cape Town's Drug Advice Centre in order to get advice on the different drug centres, as well as what they would advise what the best course of action will be.

Since one of the boys were still in school and still wanted to continue going to school on a daily basis, we had to find a walk-in clinic, instead of an in-patient clinic, as the in-patient clinic would require the boy to stay overnight and miss out on his school work. We then found a walk-in clinic in the area where both boys live, which is also free of charge.

We also met with both boys in order to talk to them about their addiction and what the cause/s were for the drug usage. One of the boys broke down crying, stating that he was struggling to come to terms with his mother's death and that with his drug addiction he was damaging his relationship with his sister, who had taken over as the head of the house after his mother's passing.

The second boy resented his mother, because he believed she had neglected him, as she had sent him away to live with family in the Eastern Cape in order to escape the problems of poverty in their area. However, the boys further states that he also lived in poverty in the Easter Cape and that his family were unable to clothe him or adequately feed him. When he returned back to Cape Town, he associated with a group of street kids who regularly used "Tik". Due to his drug addiction he also acts violently towards his mother and younger siblings.

Both boys acknowledged that their drug usage stems from emotional issues and that they wanted to take the first step by attending rehab in order to deal with these issues. They also agreed that the walk-in clinic is the first step and best start as it is in their area and the clinic would also provide support with counselling, education and employment.

On Monday, 17th August 2015, we planned to go to the walk-in rehab with both boys; however a third boy had approached Siyakathala, also with a drug addiction, so he also went a long with us.

All three of the boys were then screened and tested to see which drugs they currently had in their system, as well as were registered and given individual appointments to visit the rehab again in order to start their rehabilitation process.

All three of the boys were feeling positive when we left the centre and seem to be committed to attend the clinic again and start their journey of recovery. - Edoardo Ghio

St. Anne's

Workshop one - Self-Image and Self-Esteem

All the workshops we do at St. Anne's are aimed at motivating, empowering and boosting the women's self confidence. Therefore this particular workshop was not only aimed at boosting the self-image and self-esteem, but also for them to recognise that no-one can make you feel inadequate unless you give them the power to influence how you feel about yourself.

All the women have suffered tremendously at the hands of someone they loved and their self-esteem has been broken down, so we wanted to be able to provide the women with the opportunity to learn about self-love and self-acceptance.

We prepared a slide show presentation highlighting the difference between self-image and self-esteem, ways to improve your self-confidence, discovering and acknowledging our strengths and weakness, the role the media plays on how we feel about our self. We also had various discussion questions such as: what qualities do you like about yourself, what qualities do you like about the person next to you, what physical attributes to you like more and which do you like least and the reasons why.

After the presentation the women were very talkative, asking us questions and giving each other advice.

With the discussion questions the women were also very interactive and shared their personal experiences with us, which was great as we could see that they have learned some valuable lessons during the presentation as they were more confident. One of the ladies, who since the beginning of July had been very shy, stated that "I always felt ugly because of my scar, but now I know and realise that my scar tells a story and that it makes me feel unique and I am proud of it".

We also showed the women two videos, which both portrayed that we judge ourselves more than others judge us and that we allow the media to influence us negatively as 80% of what we see in magazines is not realistic, especially images of celebrities with their skinny bodies, perfect skin and hair, which is all a facade.

We encouraged the women to accept their physical appearance as it is, because that is what makes them unique and if they do not like the shape of their body then they should learn to exercise, because unlike celebrities we cannot pay to have different surgeries to change the way our body is or purchase expensive hair.

The women understood today's lesson and advised that they will use what they have learned in order to teach their young children the importance of self-love and self-acceptance.

As it was a few days from Women's Day, we also decorated cupcakes and had some cake and refreshments in order to celebrate the journey of women as well as for the ladies at the shelter to realise that we are proud of their journey travelled and that they should keep on making positive changes for themselves and their children as not only will they be proud of how far they have come, but that they are also able to positively influence us and their peers.

"The workshop was enjoyable. The ladies understood and appreciated the message were conveying and participated really well in the activities." - Helen Douglas

Legal Services

Maria Mulindi - Program Manager | Attorney at Law

Dimitrios Zachos- Refugee Matter

He is busy typing a report on one of his cases and will forward it to me by Tuesday, 25th August 2015.

Sherwin Daniels - Legal Services Coordinator | Attorney at Law

Emily Garner - Labour Matter

Our client is from Zimbabwe and came to us for assistance regarding his labour matter.

The client states that he along with his fellow foreign national colleagues are being discriminated against at work. They have been given less and less shifts and more South Africans have been employed even though they might not have the necessary qualifications.

The client also states that the foreign nationals only work weekends and on days when the locals want off, such as public holidays.

As the client feels that he and his foreign national colleagues are being exploited, we assisted him with obtaining a correct grievance from so that the make an official complaint to the company. We also drafted an affidavit for him, which he needs to take to the Police Station in order to have it signed and then attach it to his grievance form.

The client then took both forms to his employer, whom we are currently awaiting feedback from as we, as well as the client need to know how they will proceed with this matter.

Miriam MacDonald - Intern Supervisor | Paralegal

Laura Guerra - Protection from Harassment

The client is a young female, whom is pregnant and came to us for assistance regarding obtaining a protection order against her unborn child's father.

The client states prior to her finding out she was pregnant, her unborn child's father, who was her friend at the time spiked her drink and the next morning she work up in his house and a few weeks later she found out she was pregnant. The client further states she informed her unborn child/'s father of her pregnancy and he denied being the father. The client has since then been harassed by the unborn child's father, as well as his girlfriend.

The client thus came to us for assistance with obtaining a protection order against the unborn child's father and his girlfriend as of lately she has not only been harassed, but her and her baby's life has also been threatened by the unborn child's father.

Since the client found out she was pregnant, she was kicked out of her home, lived on the streets and tried to commit suicide as she felt she did not have any options regarding her having no home and being threatened by the child's father.

The client now has a secure place where she is living, however the unborn child's father has found out where she lives and has been trying to contact her and has been threatening her once again. The client's due date is a few days away and the child's father has threatened to kidnap the baby and sacrifice (murder) him/her.

We therefore had to get the protection order as soon as possible, however we have not been able to get a proper home or work address for the unborn child's father and the client also did not have his updated details due to him also moving. Due to the client going in labour, we had to contact the hospital to inform them of the client's situation and that security needs to be alerted if a male comes looking for the client, as well as not to let any males and any unauthorised person/s into the client's room.

The client then went into labour, without any problems and gave birth to a healthy baby girl/boy. We are happy that there were no incidents with her child's father or his girlfriend at the hospital, however the protection order still needs to be completed with the necessary details, which we are waiting for from the client's guardian.