

## Monthly Report – October 2014

### Projects Abroad Human Rights Office, Cape Town

This month we opened our doors to clients as we were closed the previous month. Although our volunteer numbers reduced significantly over the closed period, they have steadily increased and we now have 26 volunteers. When we re-opened our offices we were swamped with clients who chose not to seek assistance from any other organisation and waited till we re-opened.

### Social Justice Projects Updates

#### Vredelus house

##### Workshop one: Project Catwalk

One of the things we, as an office, focus on is doing activities that boost self-esteem and thereby build dignity in the young adults that we work with. The right to human dignity is enshrined in our constitutional and thus it is fundamental to us all.

Prior to going to Vredelus to do this workshop, interns had to gather newspapers, scissors, pens, sticky tape and accessories in order to facilitate this particular workshop. Project Catwalk is about the girls using their initiative and imagination to design a fancy outfit using these materials and then to model the outfit on a makeshift runway.

All the girls, including interns, were split into small groups and each group then had to design a fancy outfit using newspapers, hats, earrings and rings. The girls also had to choose a team member to model their dress on the runway.

The girls took this activity very seriously, as they all wanted to win, however there could only be one winner, who was chosen by how loudly the girls cheered for them.

This workshop promotes a spirit of team work, and helps the girls come out of their shell while teaching them to use their skills to create something extraordinary out of something as basic as newspapers.

The volunteers, as well as the girls from Vredelus, really enjoyed this session and have requested to do this again in the future.

##### Workshop two – Relationships & Statutory Rape

Recently social media sites have been reporting under age boys/girls being in “relationships” with older men/women.

An article which appeared on a local Facebook page concerned a fifteen year old girl who was impregnated by her twenty three year old “boyfriend”. According to the law this is a criminal offence known as statutory rape.

We decided to have a workshop around this subject as it is important to talk about relationships with family and friends, as well as to raise awareness on statutory rape, as people often do not know that it is illegal to have sexual intercourse with a person below the statutorily designated age of 16.

Most of the workshop focused on statutory rape. Most cases that have been reported concern young girls being the victims, so it was really important for us to educate the girls on child sex laws and equip them with the necessary information which they can use to avoid becoming a victim.

Interns had to do research on the age of consent for sex in South Africa, as well as child sex laws. They then had to compile the research into a slideshow presentation in order to make it an interesting topic to present and discuss with the girls at Vredelus.

We started by asking “what are the different types of relationships you have?” this was a pretty easy question, so it was not surprising when we got answers such as “relationships with family or friends” or “relationship with my boyfriend or girlfriend”.

We explained that the different relationships we have with people define who we are, as well as help build our character, and that it is important to have relationships with people who influence our lives positively.

We then asked if anyone knew what statutory rape is – it was surprising that they did not know. However, they knew what “rape” meant as some of them had been victims of this horrendous act.

We also explained that statutory rape is a criminal offence and that it is committed when an adult sexually penetrates a person who, under the law, is incapable of consenting to sex.

A lot of the girls seemed interested in the presentation; however a few felt that it was an awkward topic to discuss as some of them had been placed at Vredelus because they are rape victims.

This was an interesting subject, which not only the girls learned from, but interns as well.

We have received positive feedback from some of the girls as well as the interns regarding workshops like these where our main aim is to raise awareness and educate.

### Workshop three – Social Networking

In modern times, social networking has rapidly soared to become one of the most common ways for people to exchange messages, dialogue and share information.

As a result, social media has played a large role in transforming the ways in which people communicate with one another. Just a mere decade ago people used to meet for coffee, stop by one another's houses or pick up the phone and call each other, but in a world dominated by technology, and many individuals possessing an innate need for continuous streams of information, social networking effectively fulfils the desire for both the ability to send and receive quick, if not immediate, responses.

Conducting a workshop about social networking was important for us in order to educate the girls to be aware of the negative and positive aspects of it.

The interns researched various websites and browsed through various articles in order find a way to make this presentation interesting and interactive.

With the information obtained, we created an interactive slide show presentation about social networking.

We started this workshop by asking the girls what they knew about social networking and what kind of social networks they use.

Most of them replied Facebook, Mxit and WhatsApp, as these platforms are the most popular social networks in South Africa.

We then spoke about the following topics:

- The importance of keeping in touch with people
- Meeting new people
- Information sharing (what you should and should not share with people)
- Online stalking and predators
- Cyber bullying
- Online dating

We also explained to the girls that the internet and social websites could become addictive and that there is actually a disease called “Internet Addiction Disorder”.

The girls were showing interest and were engaging by both asking and answering questions.

Through this workshop, our main aim was to educate the girls on not sharing important information, such as your address, identity number etc, as well as how to be internet safe, not trusting people you don’t know, meeting strangers in secluded places, sending explicit pictures or messages, putting yourself in situations that you are uncomfortable with and ensuring that you do not jeopardise your reputation.

We also showed the girls two videos: the first one was about a man explaining how internet obsession can make you anti-social and affect you negatively. The second video was from the show “Catfish”. This is a phenomenon where people use online dating/chatting for several years without meeting each other in real life, establish a connection and then find out that the person they were chatting to was not really who they have claimed to be. We linked this video to the misuse of photos and information and that you should not be too trusting of strangers.

The girls understood the information they received from us, so hopefully they will keep it in mind and not over share information the next time they use social networks and to ensure that they are comfortable with whatever situation they find themselves in.

#### Workshop four – Fire Safety

An alarming number of people do not have knowledge of basic fire safety, which can result in people’s lives being at risk Due to recent fires in various townships of Cape Town,

numerous shacks have been destroyed, which has resulted in hundreds of people becoming homeless. Thus we decided to run a workshop on fire safety.

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The PAHRO interns researched recent articles about fires in Cape Town, and the devastating consequences thereof, as well as looked into different fire safety information tips.

All the research was compiled into a slideshow presentation which was presented to the girls and the rest of the PAHRO interns who attended Vredelus.

We started the workshop by asking the girls if they knew what fire safety information is vital to know and we were surprised with some of the answers received, such as “run to the nearest exit”, “do not use the elevator” and “stop, drop and roll if caught on fire”.

In the presentation we explained that all fire safety equipment should be clearly labelled and easily accessible, with instructions on how to use them being visible as knowing the necessary information can prevent major fires.

Proper safety protocol, such as stop-drop-and-roll manoeuvres, should also be taught to everyone, and it is important that regular training should be provided in order to refresh one’s memory. We also explained that most people assume a simple smoke detector will suffice, but then they forget about potential fire hazards.

We showed the girls a report by the U.S Fire Administration that from 2001-2004 there were 452 civilian deaths from fires in homes with smoke detectors, underlining the importance of staying current with all your safety measures.

Another aspect of fire information we shared is called “separation and containment”. Separation means keeping flammable materials away from fire hazards; for example, it is a bad idea to store paint or turpentine in the same room as a furnace. Containment involves having ways to keep the fire from spreading. Keeping fire hazards in separate rooms with fireproof doors can mean potential fires won't spread to other areas of the house. At the very least, containment will give family members more time to escape before becoming trapped

However, as many people in the townships of Cape Town do not have smoke detectors, it is important that they know basic fire safety information and we are hoping that the girls at Vredelus will share what they have learned with their family and friends.

This workshop was not only received positively by the girls of Vredelus, but by the interns as well, as workshops like these help save lives and are educational.

## **Bonnytown**

### Workshop one – Football game

Due to the boys not getting to do outdoor activities often, and due to previous requests, we decided to have this football game between PAHRO interns and the Bonnytown boys.

The purpose of this match was for the interns and boys to bond in a different social setting, as well as for the boys to work together as a team, to find solutions and strategies on how to win the game.

The boys really enjoyed the match and appreciated that we have honoured their request. Through good teamwork and skills the boys managed to win the game and were rewarded with a much valued trophy, as well as juice and scrumptious oranges.

#### Workshop two – Relationships & Statutory Rape

This was the same workshop which was done at Vredelus; however, we felt that the response was rather awkward as some of the boys had been placed at Bonnytown for sexual offences.

#### Workshop three: Social Networking

We did the same workshop as was done at Vredelus, although we focused more on the boys being respectful of girls' choices when they say "no" (to requests for explicit pictures, sexting, etc.), when the girls feel uncomfortable in a situation or when they do not want to share personal information on social networks.

The boys seemed interested and focused during the workshop, and they asked questions about what they should do in certain situations. They engaged in conversation with the rest of the boys and interns.

#### Workshop four – Fire Safety

This was the same workshop as was done at Vredelus.

The boys were not focused in the beginning; however, when we mentioned the recent fires and how the basic fire safety information could save their house or the lives of themselves and their family, they began to listen attentively.

#### Workshop five – Football game

This was our second football game at Bonnytown this month; however this was with a different dormitory.

Unfortunately the boys of Bonnytown did not win the game, but they still enjoyed playing football and being outside, bonding with the rest of their team and the interns.

After the game the boys and the interns enjoyed juice and oranges together and once again the boys requested to have more outdoor activities, as they really enjoy this different setting.

#### **Ottery Youth Care**

We have been unable to attend Ottery Youth Care and Education Centre in the mornings due

to new structures being implemented. However, in the last week of the month we were able to attend twice in the afternoon.

### Workshop one: Team Building

This was our first afternoon workshop in a while, so we decided to make it a fun session.

We facilitated a team building session, by dividing the boys and interns into groups and asking them to make a human pyramid. The group whose pyramid stayed up the longest or was the highest and won some sweets.

This was a fun activity as it allowed for the boys and interns to get to know each other, bond and practice team-building skills.

### Workshop two – Role Models & Educational Quiz

We started by explaining why positive role models are important and how the boys should choose a role model.

When asked if the boys had positive role models most of them said “yes”, however it was clear that most of their role models were not positively influencing their lives due to them ending up in Ottery Youth Care, or still having the mentality that being in gangs or using drugs is “cool”.

After we explained what positive role models are, we broke the boys into groups for them to discuss the aspects of a positive role model, as well as for them to see what they had to change about themselves in order for them to one day be a positive role model.

We also had an educational quiz, which was on the history and geography of South Africa.

The boys really enjoyed this as they got to learn more about their country, such as the landmarks, popular sports, politics and the different cultures. Seeing that this was a quiz, it was interesting to see how much the boys knew and how keen they were to share their knowledge.

We will be doing a more detailed workshop on the history and geography of South Africa in the future, as there are so many interesting facts and myths about our beautiful country.

### **Women’s Shelters**

**Sisters Incorporated** resumed in week three due to the ladies all having jobs or voluntary positions.

### Workshop one – Oscar Pistorius

There were initially two women present for the session; however this increased to five as three ladies returned from their appointments. Miriam MacDonald and Molly Stephens also had a consultation with one of the resident women, having previously assisted her brother with a divorce matter. This new case involves a land claim, as her family had been forcibly removed from the District Six area.

The volunteers began by introducing themselves to the ladies, as none of them had attended before. They spoke a bit about themselves and where they are from, and then started up a general conversation with the women. They had prepared a discursive workshop regarding the Oscar Pistorius trial, given that the sentencing in this landmark case had been handed down just two days before. This took the form of looking at the circumstances from different angles, such as what if the perpetrator had been a black man without such great financial means? What if the victim had been male and the shooter female? The issue surrounding Oscar Pistorius' right to privacy was also discussed. The women did not know the facts of the case but were keen to learn more about it, and got involved in comparing the trial to hypothetical alternatives, especially when it came to discussing the sentencing, at which point the question surrounding the death penalty was raised. The volunteers had planned to play a game towards the end of the session; however the conversation took over the two hours.

#### Workshop two – Clothing sale preparation

We did not hold a workshop on this day, as the volunteers assisted in the preparation for another clothing sale fundraising event.

The volunteers then attended the sale the following day, Friday 31st October.

#### St Anne's

The sessions were cancelled for the first two weeks due to the ladies all having jobs.

#### Workshop one – Mental and physical health

There were four women at the shelter, and so three volunteers did a presentation on mental and physical well-being. As a lot of the ladies often disclose that they have anger management issues, we covered issues such as controlling stress, different relaxation techniques and the benefits of exercise. The ladies were very talkative about how they try to maintain a healthy balance, both for themselves and their children. The group spoke for an hour and a half, and then they played a word game until the end of the session.

#### Workshop two – Basic First Aid

There were five ladies in attendance, two of whom were new. The volunteers had prepared a workshop on basic first aid. This was done in a theoretical capacity, as opposed to physical, as we do not have trained first aid workers. It revolved around some basic myths about what to do and what not to do in certain circumstances, such as how to treat minor burns and wounds. A couple of the ladies believed that you should use butter for the former, and sand for the latter. They also talked about how certain over-the-counter medicine can have detrimental effects on one's health, which prompted one of the women to contact her doctor to ensure that she is taking the correct medication. Following the workshop, the ladies and volunteers engaged in some general chat, and then played a game which everybody really enjoyed. The ladies seemed to really enjoy the morning, and were very engaged throughout.

#### Workshop three – Oscar Pistorius

This workshop went very much the same as the one held at Sisters Incorporated. Again, the ladies were uncertain of the facts of the case, but became very involved in discussing

different scenarios which might have played out had the financial and social circumstances of the perpetrator been different. The general feel from each of the shelters was that the sentence of five years, of which he may only serve ten months, did not fit the severity of the crime. There was also a lot of discussion about how the victim, Reeva Steenkamp, has often been disregarded (at least in international media) in the sense that she was referred to as “Oscar’s Girlfriend”, without taking her credentials as a Law graduate and successful model in her own right into account. Following the discussion, the volunteers and ladies played a word game, which is always very popular among the women, and then just had a chat together.

## **Legal Services**

### **Maria Mulindi**

#### **Moot court**

On Friday, 17 October 2014, the volunteers took part in a moot concerning the case of our client who was arrested for suspicion of possession of stolen goods. The teams were as follows:

Prosecution: Edward Keeling, Francesco Belloni, Simona Manalova, Patricia Lam;  
Defence: Jack Harrison, Christian Tabler, Phoebe Richardson, Agness Moerman.

The prosecution charged the client with Inability to give satisfactory account of possession of goods suspected of being stolen (contravention of section 36 of the General Law Amendment Act 62 of 1955). The prosecution argued that all the elements of the offence were present in this case. The goods were 760 litres of diesel. The goods were found in possession of client and his brother by having direct control of the goods in the car. There was a reasonable suspicion that the goods had been stolen, due to the quantity, time of arrest and no reason given by either client or his brother. The last element, the accused must be unable to give a satisfactory explanation of the possession was also present. As in the case of Shakane (1998), explanation or reaction when asked where the accused obtained the property or who the owner thereof, may well be relevant in deciding whether there was a reasonable suspicion.

The defence argued that the client was not in possession of the goods, as it was his brother driving the car and the client was hitch hiking his way to Zimbabwe and met his brother on the road. The defence argued further that the client was not aware of the goods. When asked why the client had diesel on his shoes, the defence argued that the Bakkie (pick-up truck) had a big compartment and the window must have been open and the diesel was spilled. Also, the client was expressing his right to remain silent and not give an account when arrested by the police.

After both arguments were presented, it was open to the volunteers and staff members of PAHRO to vote either guilty or not guilty, based on the aforementioned argument. The vote was 10 (guilty) to 8 (not guilty) in favour of the prosecution.

#### **Conclusion**

We will be moving offices in the month of December, so we are currently busy notifying all our clients of our move. We still look forward to receiving new and old clients in the month



of December.

Most of our project partners also close within the first two weeks of December, so our Social Justice Workshops will be limited or reduced.