

ProjectsAbroad



HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE

# **MONTHLY REPORT**

## **CAPE TOWN - JULY 2012**



Nelson Mandela Day – The month of July is a huge month for celebrations in South Africa. Nelson Mandela's birthday is celebrated on the 18th July and everyone is encouraged to give 67 minutes of their time to help others. For the Human Rights Office we wanted to do something a little different to the work we usually do and so we organised to have a soup kitchen in one of the townships. Volunteers spent time walking around the houses and informing people that we were giving away the soup whilst the others stayed to dish up the warm soup and bread from a local church in the area. It was great to see people so appreciative of such a small gesture and there was a real buzz amongst volunteers.



## SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT UPDATES

**Bonnytown** – This month we have been conducting activities in Bonnytown which make the boys think about their future. We got them discussing their biggest fears to which many responded that their biggest fear was going back onto drugs once they were released. This seems to be a common fear amongst the boys as well as the fear of getting caught up in the life they were once involved in and resorting back to a life of crime. It was good for the boys to discuss such issues and begin to think of ways that they can prevent this from happening. We focused on getting them to plan out a timeline of their life which included stages in their life that they had lived through and significant points in their life that they hoped to achieve such as having a family and owning a house.



**St Anne's** – The numbers of women at St Anne's has been dwindling because the women who are staying there have been successful in getting jobs. This is great news and is a great positive step for their futures. Volunteers have continued to visit those women who are still left however and continue discussions with them hoping to help them to gain more knowledge of their rights and develop more confidence in themselves and a more positive outlook for their future.

**Young in Prison - Huis Vredulus** – One of the sessions this month involved an activity where the girls were asked to anonymously write down a secret that no one knew about them and put it in a box. All of the secrets were then read out and at the end discussed as a group. This was quite a shocking activity and some of the girls secrets shocked our volunteers. Such things as 'I want to kill myself' and 'I was raped' had been written by the girls. It was hard for some of our volunteers to hear these things and difficult to know how to respond. However speaking about such things for the girls seemed to help them and volunteers were overwhelmed that the girls trusted them so much to disclose such secrets. There was also a talent show held which the girls and volunteers loved. They were able to really express themselves and had a great time.

**Ottery Education and Youth Centre** – This month volunteers conducted a football tournament with the boys as well as an educational quiz which was a fun way for the boys to express themselves whilst also learning a lot. A lot of life skills are taught to the boys, once such thing focused on this month was 'self-expression'. It is essential for these boys to learn to express themselves in a positive way and they have responded well to workshops conducted regarding this.

**Pollsmoor Prison** – This is a new project which has only involved limited volunteers due to the strict restrictions on entering the prison. We have been attending the prison alongside the organisation 'Young in Prison' and conducting workshops with the young adult women's section. The women have responded well to our visits and really opened up and showed obvious appreciation for the time we were spending with them. This is a project we would love to continue with but will need to look into logistics of. However it has allowed a few volunteers a great opportunity to see the inside of one of South Africa's most notorious prisons and get a real feel for what things are like there.

## LEGAL SERVICES UPDATES

Legal clinics continue to bring in many new clients for the office. With such high numbers of volunteers throughout July we have ensured that everyone who wants to experience a legal clinic has had the chance whilst also ensuring these clients get the best advice possible. A lot of the research work is done by volunteers back at the office and then followed up with the clients either by phone or in person at the next legal clinic.

