





Outreach social work with shoe-cleaners and their families in La Paz, Bolivia

<p>Information about the organisation</p>	<p>VAMOS JUNTOS Anholter Postweg 11 46395 Bocholt</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tel. 0049 2871 9918863 info@vamosjuntos.de www.vamosjuntos.de</p>
<p>Objectives</p> <p>VAMOS JUNTOS means: Let us walk together</p>	<p>VAMOS JUNTOS Freundeskreis Deutschland – Bolivien e.V. is a support organisation.</p> <p>VAMOS JUNTOS is a registered charity which supports the identically named partner organisation: ONG Asociación de apoyo social y educativo VAMOS JUNTOS in La Paz, Bolivia.</p> <p>VAMOS JUNTOS, Germany, has been supporting the work for the last 19 years. VAMOS JUNTOS Bolivia is an organisation which directly supports the social, economic and educational needs of shoe-cleaners working in La Paz. Our partnership focuses on improving the quality of life for the shoe-cleaners and their families with a particular emphasis on improving education, health and recognition in society. The basis of our work is the concept of offering help to empower self-help, achieved by face-to-face encounter and support. It is a partnership of equals.</p>
<p>Target Group</p> 	<p>VAMOS JUNTOS works with shoe-cleaners in La Paz who because of their indigenous origins and low socio economic status and their work as shoe-cleaners are multiply discriminated against by society.</p> <p>The shoe-cleaners and their families who are supported by our organisations amount to about 2 ½ thousand people.</p>
<p>Together we are strong</p> 	<p>In the summer school holidays, December to January, and the winter holidays in July we offer shoe-cleaners' children multi-day seminars. These seminars are regularly attended by more than 200 children and adolescents.</p> <p>In the seminars we encourage and teach reading, numeracy and creative writing as well as creativity, artistic expression and the development of motor skills. Additionally there are seminars for parents where above all strategies for finding solutions to familial problems are prioritised.</p>
<p>Ensuring school attendance</p> 	<p>In order to guarantee attendance at the beginning of the school year in February we always provide shoe-cleaners' children with reading and writing materials. Shoes are additionally provided for about 200 children and adolescents. 98% of shoe-cleaners' children attend school and many of the older children complete an apprenticeship or period of further education.</p> <p>Compared with 19 years ago when our work began, and resulting from the different ways we have found of supporting the children's education we have substantially assisted in bringing about a situation where none of the shoe-cleaners' children works regularly as a shoe cleaner during term time.</p>

<p>Education and study</p> 	<p>We support shoe-cleaners as well as their wives and children with bursaries to enable professional training or for a period of study in order to advance their opportunities for achieving safer and more secure means of support. In addition we allow them to use the library in the rooms associated with VAMOS JUNTOS.</p>
<p>Empowering women's radiance</p> 	<p>Once a fortnight female shoe-cleaners and the wives and sisters of shoe-cleaners meet in seminars for discussions and to learn about topics of interest to them. Additionally they can learn artistic skills, for example the production of post-cards which can be sold in Germany and Bolivia. In this way the women have the opportunity to contribute financially to the family finances.</p>
<p>The Hope Project</p> 	<p>In the 'Hope Project' people with alcohol problems meet regularly for discussions. We provide participants with materials to reduce their dependency on alcohol, for example the abstinence plan or the drink diary. We also accompany dependent individuals to advice centres and support them with the costs of attendance at rehabilitation centres</p>
<p>Aging with dignity</p> 	<p>There is a weekly meeting of shoe-cleaners aged between 60 and 89 giving them the opportunity of spending time together, exchanging news, modelling and singing. Social workers and a physiotherapist attend the meetings, the former facilitating talk about troubling issues and the latter helping with the reduction of pains. Many of the shoe-cleaners take part in basic literacy and follow-on literacy development courses. There are regular seminars on health topics and also on political and social problems.</p>
<p>Health</p> 	<p>We support shoe-cleaners and their family members during medical examinations, operations and periods of time in hospital. There are regular seminars on the prevention of various problems and also an annual dental health check-up for children and gynaecological examinations for women.</p>
<p>The "Alternative Tourist" project</p> 	<p>Our "alternative tourist trip" is called, 'Walking In the shoes of others'. By acting as tourist guides shoe-cleaners show inhabitants of La Paz, other Bolivians and foreign tourists round the important city centre sites and bring them into contact with the locals – (The Paceños). The tourists concurrently gain an insight into the lives of the shoe-cleaners in La Paz. As the participating tourists are introduced to the history of shoe-cleaners, their lives in the city and their work, a contradiction is given to the generally held negative stereotypes. This creates a positive image of the shoe-cleaners' position in society.</p>