

Let's make a deal: Let's treat each other well!

Communicating better relationships in families and communities in Argentina.

WACC's programme 'Communication for Peace' supports the emergence of tolerant and well-integrated societies at local, national and global levels, in the belief that peaceful societies are founded on political, economic, social and gender justice.

Recently WACC supported a project in Argentina focused on tackling violence against women and children, particularly in the family, by means of a public campaign to treat people better. The following report (translated from Spanish) was provided by the Centre for Women's Studies and Research (CEIM, using its Spanish acronym) based in the province of Buenos Aires.

"Violence within the family and child abuse are problems that affect our city as well as many others. They arise from a breakdown in family relationships, inadequate guidelines for bringing up children, lack of communication within the family, poverty and loss of values. They affect women and children who are the most exposed to such problems, which is why we need to build awareness among people and help reduce its prevalence.

"With this in mind, CEIM thought up a campaign to promote better relationships in family relations, with friends, at work, at school, etc. The idea was that it would bring better results in terms of involvement and would allow us to tackle the problem in a positive way and put the issue on the public agenda. In this way we would be helping to lower the incidence of violence in every way.

"From long experience of the problem, CEIM knew that generally society rejects violence against women, but does not want to be actively involved in the struggle against it. Society is more sensitive to violence against children and old people. For this reason, CEIM decided to find another means of bringing the issue to public attention that would allow us to gain entrance to different sectors of society, achieving greater pick up and commitment and at the same time better results (both economic as well as better communication impact and effective reduction of violence).

"Talking of treating each other well doesn't just refer to not maltreating, but that it is necessary to go further, to talk about a social context that as a whole guarantees, protects and allows full enjoyment of rights and, as a consequence, all-embracing development and the progressive exercise of citizenship. That's why treating each other well is a broader concept that involves every aspect of daily life.

"This communication strategy by CEIM clearly contributed to advancing the institution's mission. To the extent that the community was able to involve itself in the campaign and see the benefits fairer treatment brought both to men and to women, the community felt more inclined to collaborate with our work and to feel greater empathy with our work.

"The campaign, whose slogan was 'Let's make a deal: Let's treat each other well!', planned activities that were aimed not just at young men, but that foresaw the possibility that they would become future fathers and teachers. The activities included making a promotional video for use in workshops; a puppet show (with Muppets) designed by the staff and children of the Home 'Dawn' based around themes like love, respect, tolerance, equality, justice, and peace; and using gigantic advertising screens

on different public transport lines in the city of San Nicolás and other locations, which large numbers of people saw during the life of the campaign.

“Workshops were carried out for the staff of the Home ‘Dawn’ and then for the children and mothers. And, in a second phase, those workshops were repeated in different public and private schools in the city. All the workshops promoted the theme of good treatment from a rights perspective focused on a population made up largely of children and adolescents.

“Among the results with the highest impact we can highlight the fact that the campaign allowed us to consolidate identification of the institution with work we have been doing since 2000 to prevent violence. In addition, it resulted in a lot of people asking CEIM for assessments in matters of preventing violence and the opportunity of adding people and institutions dedicated to tackling violence in the city.

“In particular the use of unconventional media (such as advertisements on public transport) was especially effective in bringing home the message of the need to tackle and prevent violence. All in all, the campaign was very successful.”

The video, photos and further information can be found at www.ceim.org.ar