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***The Advocacy Role of CIRs***

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**Girl Child in Street Peril**

FAMU during 2007 will be working on a project in the city of Rosario in association with members of CIFER, the Rosario Council of Women Organizations. The girl child in street peril "etharian group" has been chosen because although the country as a whole has advanced protective legislation for minors, having good laws is not necessarily enough to solve extreme social problems or realize rights. Least of all when administrations and mean politicians keep poverty and social work plans hostages of their greediness and as instruments for populism and electoral "clienteles". This continues to happen in Argentina - a country that produces of millions of tons of commodities that are exported around the world but which has not eradicated bad nutrition and poor children roaming on the streets and least of all, sheltered the girl child. The paradox is that, no legal or traditional cultural or social discrimination has ever existed in any form in Argentina against the girl child as such, as is the case in other places. However hundreds of them are actually victims of family violence and brutality: physical abuse, punishment, murder, infant work, rape, incestuous relations with male relatives (fathers, step fathers, uncles, brothers), street prostitution, illegal abortion, premature birth, distribution or consumption of drugs and the sort. This situation is also manifested in some of its forms, to a lesser extent, among middle and upper class families. It is sadly an almost a natural situation among poor and needy families within the environment of "villas miserias", where, out of necessity, promiscuity in overcrowded dwellings has become an acceptable pattern of family life and also of parenthood.

Therefore to throw a girl child, even if under 7, into down town streets appears simply the easiest way for relatives to raise daily money. What is most worrying about this human traffic, resulting in various kind of prostitution, assault and robbery, is the realization that in most cases it is carried out under the strict surveillance of older female relatives and most often by their mothers.

This needy and ever increasing population has become a "political clients", who has consequently abandoned the culture of work and neglected the meaningful value of a job. Also among them it reflects the highly dangerous promotion of consumption coming from the media, radio, TV and publicity in general and the tremendous influence this has on promoting criminal patterns of behaviour such

as robbery, assaults and violence and what is more daring, social annoyance and resentment.

Our modest action intends to prepare a volunteer team with the assistance of specialists with the idea of approaching these girls in the street so as to be able through them to reach those older women relatives behind them. In this sense, knowing the risks these actions could have, and in order to improve our chances to approach them we have investigated the possibility of offering our help to members of the minor judiciary services to deal with them, preferably on a personal basis and using a totally different approach from the red tape kind that occasionally characterises governmental sponsored social work.

We may not solve the problem but it will be a good start to raising a conscience within this particular group of “mother and girl child in street peril” about the risks and uncertainties created for their future recovery from the damage caused to their mental, moral and physical health and growth by these early shocking, street experiences. This has led us to the conviction that family and social violence against women, the world over, still remains as the least advanced chapter in the protection of Human Rights.

Regardless of all achievements that advocacy actions have so far obtained and continue to obtain, by failing to condemn sexual harassment, and family violence we cannot reach equality in political and academic representation, professional activities, etc. We must continue to strive to reach the effective realization of rights for girls and women both within families and in society and not only in the letter of the law.

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