



Individual NGO report in Relation to the
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ARGENTINA

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*The submission can be posted on the CEDAW website

Introduction

1. This contribution is a submission of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 1996 to bring to the UN the concerns of the most vulnerable people especially women and girls. We are based in 73 countries around the world.

2. The Congregation of our Lady of the Charity of the Good Shepherd began its activities in Argentina in the city of Buenos Aires in the year 1885, with the care of children and adolescents. In the country the Institute has had a strong and important role through its ministry with women deprived of freedom, young people, especially teenagers and girls in vulnerable situations or social risk of any kind.

3. We submit information in regarding article 11 of the CEDAW: *States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:*

- (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;*
- (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;*
- (c) The right to job security;*
- (d) The right to social security*

We quote the recommendations made by the Committee to the State party in relation to the mentioned article:

- National mechanisms and incorporation of a gender perspective in policies and national programs.
- It does not seem that national mechanisms are fully equipped to promote the effective advancement of women and gender equality or to prepare for the implementation of public policies throughout the country. The implementation of the Convention presents large discrepancies between the various provinces and municipalities, while certain social obstacles have not yet been removed.

Good Shepherd in Cafayate City:

4. Cafayate is a town in the Calchaquies Valley situated in the southwest of the Province of Salta, in the North of Argentina, part of the country with much poverty and an unfavorable economic situation. One of the main problems of Salta is the so-called “informal economy” (unregistered), commonly called the “black economy”. In rural areas, many inhabitants work in business or unregistered agricultural holdings. In the provincial capital you can see thousands of “street vendors”.

5. In the 1990s the Congregation began direct service to children and women with low-income and in vulnerable situations in the city of Cafayate.

6. In the social and economic critical context of the country and with negative consequences especially in the region of the North, an area of greater poverty, with a high percentage of unemployment, we perceived the need to support women in particular those who are the heads of households. These heads of the family home are often constrained to leave their children alone or in the care of strangers in order to seek employment. To alleviate this problem, a service of daycare for children 6 months to 4 years was created, with some teachers and care-givers from among the mothers themselves.

7. At the same time this difficult economic situation causes a high rate of malnutrition. For this reason the State organized community kitchens, in partnership with civil and ecclesial institutions. Later a nursery was added and a children's dining room. The mothers themselves participated in the preparation of meals and cleaning of the place.

8. Because of the high level of malnutrition medical care was required and periodic inspections. This led to the need for a Health Centre in working in coordination with the city's Hospital.

9. At the same time, a process to promote the skills and opportunities of the group of women was developed. This was done through training and various enterprises (workshops of candies, pastry, tissues, and number of sales, etc.).

10. The multiple and varied activities have been developed with both private and State bodies e.g. workshops in relation to the gender violence, alcoholism, health care, breastfeeding, care of those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, etc.

11. Currently, the service has expanded the children's dining room to include teenage students at the secondary level from neighboring towns who have a whole day of work at the school. We saw the need of the opening of this service (dining room) because those teenagers of both sexes are distant from their families and do not have money to pay for lunch in a restaurant. Previously the Municipality had provided a house where they could go to eat and stay during the week but this was closed.

Analysis of situation

12. We acknowledge the intentions and efforts made at the governmental level to solve the problem of poverty and understand the limited access of the poorest groups to having their basic needs satisfied.

13. But we also agree with the analysis of social researchers, from which we quote here some conclusions:

14. "Unfortunately, once more, social statistics of the Observatory of the Argentina Social Debt tend to confirm that, despite measures aimed at the

protection of the poorest sectors, an important part of the society still continues to be a 'surplus population' for the system as a whole, i.e., lacks a minimum of conditions of economic livelihood and social integration.

15. While our investigations have never ceased to give an account of the progress made in this field, the study has shown that there is still an unequal economic, social and cultural matrix, based on the conditions of a social reproduction and unable to secure a job in quality and a full citizenship for all. The need for democracy to gain full confidence in citizenship continues to be also a social debt.

16. Between 2010 and 2014, we have evidence of a decrease in the rate of poverty of the most disadvantaged households in economical, occupational and residential terms. This is explained by the extension of coverage of social and welfare policy, mainly from 2009, as well as programmes of transfer income targeting the most vulnerable. However, this positive impact of social and welfare policy is not so clearly observed in assessing poverty rates.

17. The increase in the population covered by social programs of the State, a fact in itself positive, at the same time reveals the existence of a population affected with regard to an employment enjoying full rights and access to the corresponding protection system. Over the period 2010-2014 a sustained increase of the total receipt transfer income to households is observed, even intensified in the last year.

18. The surveyed data allow us to infer that between 2010 and 2014 there was a slight decrease in the proportion of employment enjoying the full rights.

19. The cyclical policies of the national Government managed to reduce the unemployment rate, but increasing, in relative terms, the unstable underemployment.

20. Figures show some serious deficits in this regard. Persistence of an informal (unregistered work sector). Heterogeneity of the productive structure and limited opportunities for access to a work enjoying the full rights. The high rotation between periods of employment and unemployment remains a problem to be resolved. In fact, in the population economically active, 1 of every 4 people interviewed said having experienced at least one situation of unemployment during the last year. In any case, the sectors mainly affected are which reside in slums and precarious settlements, people with a very low socio-economic level, those members of household that not are household heads, women, young and older people, people who do not finished studies and people working in the informal sector of the economy.¹

¹ Excerpt from the report of the '[Observatorio de la Deuda Social Argentina](http://www.uca.edu.ar/uca) de la Universidad Católica' Argentina-July 2015, www.uca.edu.ar/uca

Our contribution and consideration:

21. Members of our organization in the town of Cafayate, as well as direct contact with women who daily attend the services previously described and the information they get from meetings, carried out a survey on a population sample of 18 women. It is a small sample because it is a new group that has started only recently. Members of our Organization travel to visit them in the neighboring towns and provide training in weaving and sewing etc.

22. The goal of the workshops is not only to enable the women to work, but also promote the cultural experience of the encounter and the co-learning. The hope is that this will strengthen links and mutual collaboration within the community. The women are from a small locality in a rural area with few possibilities to move to other urban centers because of their economic situation with a low-income and because they are needed in their role as housewives.

23. We believe that women are at a disadvantage because they do not have possibility to access a stable, formal and well-paid job. This is because the vast majorities are household heads, in charge of children and all the obligations that this entails.

24. The programmes referred to the Seventh Periodic Report of the 14 August 2010, that the Argentine State performs under the commitments emanating from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, they are unknown by those participating in the survey (sample of 18 women).

25. Women live in the town of Cafayate and surrounding areas (North of the country). We think that because they ignore the existence of the programmes organized by the Government, women cannot benefit from these programmes.

26. We note the lack of a stable and registered labor market. Women in the survey expressed this, but in addition to this informal and unregistered work they do not have a social security, benefits of coverage of health, holidays, licenses, etc. and the salary is very low.

27. Even though the town of Cafayate is an important area of tourism that receives a large flow of domestic and foreign tourists, women are called to work in the accommodation services in an intermittent or temporary situation according to the influx of tourists. This causes the proliferation of unstable and unregistered work.

28. The economy is concentrated on the more affluent economic groups who are not from this region. These groups are the owners of large wineries, hotels and restaurants as well as shops selling various regional crafts.

29. Even though women in the area are very skilled in the production of handicrafts, they must sell them to these shops at a very low price. There is no programme which supports initiatives favoring women who produce handicrafts. This makes it difficult for micro enterprises to get a decent and fair income.

30. It draws our attention to the fact that population of our survey, even with full secondary level education, are unable to find a better pay and stable work. (In the appendix document you will get information on what we described above)

Recommendations

We respectfully recommend that the committee urge the State Party as a matter of priority:

- To implement strategies of development in regional economies, for example micro-productive enterprises and activities which extend beyond the stable labor market for women guaranteeing them a decent income.
- To do this it is necessary the creation and promotion of education and job-training programmes taking into account the abilities of the target population, cultural features, and the demand for tourism in this region.
- Wider dissemination of programs that benefit women, programs which would be of real practical use to them.
- Strengthen State's control to facilitate the legal work, in order to reduce social inequality that produces informal work and allow the enjoyment of social rights such as social security, health, holidays, licensing of maternity and illness coverage.
- Implementation of a programme of support to women heads of family and for the care and education of their children, in order to empower them in the development of their skills and abilities, and towards the achievement of their personal and social autonomy.
- That the State promotes daily care centers for children aged 0 to 3, so that mothers can go to work leaving their children in the care in these centers.