

## ACER Brasil – Proposal for funding by BERFRED (2022)

### Proposal overview:

Brazilian society is characterized by high levels of interpersonal violence (60,000 murders per year) and also a great prevalence of sexual abuse which mostly occurs within families. In 2021 there were 35,735 notified rapes of children under the age of 14 of whom 85% were girls – this is an increase on the numbers for 2019 (pre-Covid) and given that schools were closed during most of 2021 (they are often the place where children denounce violence suffered to trusted teachers) which implies significant under-reporting; it is clear that one of the significant impacts of the pandemic is a massive increase in sexual crimes against children. In fact, whilst for much of the pandemic, adults were able to go about their lives with varying levels of restrictions, what we found in our community is that effectively children and teenagers were kept locked at home (for their safety – as families received very conflicting messages about Covid 19) and their social spaces and interactions were limited to immediate family. Children only returned to full time education in February 2022, almost 2 years after the beginning of pandemic restrictions and our municipal government did an evaluation of literacy and numeracy of all children from 6-10 years old and discovered that the following rates of children who were illiterate and had no numeracy: 90% of 1<sup>st</sup> graders (6 years old), 78% of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, 48% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and 31% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders! In addition, we are now in the middle of the school year and around 10% of children from Grade 1 through 5 have not returned to school at all.

How has this manifested itself amongst the children of our community and those served by ACER Brazil? In general, children are greatly lacking in social skills and so in all activities, we are seeing high levels of physical and verbal violence between children and also manifestations of highly sexualized behaviour. An extreme example of restricted socialization within families was shown when an 8 year old child came to activities for the first time in July and didn't know his own name – only the nickname his family called him. Our Child Protection Officer has been delivering workshops to all classes of children and teenagers through the past year which have focused on identifying forms of violence and appropriate and inappropriate physical touching and interaction (especially with adults, including family members). In focus groups held with children under 12, we discovered that they were completely unable to identify either violence or sexual abuse, as all kinds of behaviours have become normalized within families. She also delivered some workshops concerning bodily functions and personal hygiene and through these, in addition to discovering that very few parents taught their children healthy habits, she identified three suspected cases of child sexual abuse which she has followed up with the relevant authorities and support for the children.

In 2022, we were approached by a Taiwanese civil society organisation called “Force for Boob” who focus on reducing barriers to girls participating in sports through providing an education kit focussing on the breasts, their function and functioning and who also gave an initial donation of 20 sports bras. After we translated the educational materials, the Child Protection Officer delivered the workshop to two groups of girls and it was so successful that she identified the need to deliver the workshop to all of the girls and young women we work with, supported by giving kits made

up of the hygiene materials that girls need to look after themselves. This action will make an important difference not only enabling girls get to know and understand their bodies but also helping them know how to protect themselves from sexual abuse and exploitation. In addition we foresee that all of the girls who participate in the workshop will take the knowledge and teach their younger siblings as well as sharing with their mothers.

The female hygiene kits to be given to each one of the workshop participants will be made up of toothbrush, toothpaste & dental floss; soap, shampoo, conditioner, body cream & hair cream; hairbrush, comb, nail clippers, deodorant, cotton buds, shower sponge, razor, toilet paper, mods and wet wipes; for those doing sporting activities and of a suitable age, they will also receive a sports bra.

Four areas of change we plan on achieving are:

1. Children and young people will significantly increase their understanding of what is abuse and violence and be aware of the ACER Brazil Child Protection Policy and know how to effectively use its mechanisms for their own benefit.
2. 180 girls and young women will fully understand the functioning of the female body and its transformations when going through puberty and will also understand how to maintain their personal hygiene using the correct products.
3. External organisations and government agencies will have ACER Brazil as a reference to consult and support them in their own pathways towards improved child safeguarding.
4. Five organisations from the States of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo will have safeguarding officers trained and prepared to fully implement their own safeguarding policies in day-to-day activities.

Project Activities:

In order to deliver the project, we shall develop the following activities:

1. Deliver 4 group activities per year about child safeguarding, prevention and sanitary care to each one of ACER's classes (28).
2. Deliver 2 group activities per year to 180 girls and young women above the age of 9 doing activities at ACER; one activity will be about breasts and bodily & hormonal changes and the other about general female hygiene.
3. Administer and investigate all referrals and follow-ups to the ACER Child Protection System.
4. Give individual counselling to any child or young person who needs it and also family orientation when necessary.
5. Deliver monthly safeguarding training to staff from different teams or collectively to the whole staff team and volunteers.
6. Give individual support to staff members about safeguarding.

7. Hold a webinar sharing safeguarding experiences from different organisations in Brazil.
8. Safeguarding officers from 5 organisations shadow our Child Protection Officer.

Reporting:

CARF-UK & ACER Brazil will provide a quantitative and short narrative report demonstrating progress towards achieving the 4 areas of change after six months and at the end of a year.

2022/2023 budget for Child Protection Officer to work directly with and for 540 children and young people and for her to deliver female hygiene and self-care workshops distributing kits to 180 girls and receive safeguarding officers from 5 organisations from the States of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo to shadow her for periods from 3 days to a week each:

ITEM	TOTAL COST (CHF)	BERFRED (CHF)		LOCAL SPONSORS (CHF)	ACER
Child protection officer salary	17,700	8,850	50%	8,850	50%
180 Female Hygiene Kits	8,000	7,000	87.5%	1,000	12.5%
Phone and Internet Contract	360	180	50%	180	50%
Local transport	600	300	50%	300	50%
Pedagogical materials for activities with children	660	430	67%	230	33%
Accounting & Admin costs	1000	500	50%	500	50%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>28,320</b>	<b>17,260</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>11,060</b>	<b>39%</b>

6<sup>th</sup> August 2022



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