

Background

Located in the Lakes Region of Argentine Patagonia, Bariloche has experienced a tremendous boom in its tourist economy over the past thirty years. While this has allowed for the swift development of a high-class leisure culture, much of the population was excluded from this boom and subsequently marginalized. Currently, over one quarter of the city's population does not have work.

In 1989, Fundación Gente Nueva was founded to address this growing wealth disparity. Working with the most marginalized populations of the city, Gente Nueva strives to empower individuals so that they may become central actors in their endeavor to live *la vida digna* (a dignified life). Over the past twenty years, Gente Nueva has built strategic alliances across several local institutions engaged in productive activities to help young people develop the entrepreneurial spirit as well as technical and administrative skills necessary for success. Today, over 5,000 students have passed through Gente Nueva's schools and 3,000 Bariloche residents have directly benefitted from the organization's various other programs spanning capacity building, career development, and microfinance, among others.

Project Description

Beginning in September 2011, I will spend twelve months working with Gente Nueva to advance its goal of empowering individuals of impoverished communities to act on their own behalf. Throughout this period, my primary responsibilities will be divided among the three programs:

1. ***Que todos trabajen (So That All May Work)***

The aim of this program is to support marginalized youth and young adults so that they may finish their education, find employment and, most importantly, become self-reliant individuals. Over the course of nine months, students will participate in life skills workshops and career development courses, encouraging them to become productive, responsible and engaged members of their community. In addition to assisting the Program Director with these courses, I will also be interviewing past students to compile a social impact assessment.

2. **Microfinance Programs**

I will also be working with the Microfinance Director, directly assisting her with development, planning and administrative tasks. Additionally, I will be conducting personal interviews with individual entrepreneurs, which I will then compile into a report which will serve as a benchmark to track the program's progress.

3. **Fundación PETISOS**

The objective of Fundación PETISOS is to eradicate child labor and support the rights of children and youth through advocacy, reintegration programs and community involvement. In addition, Fundación PETISOS provides childcare to the most marginalized and impoverished communities of Bariloche so that parents may work during the daytime. I will be working with the director and founder of Fundación PETISOS on projects to advance advocacy against child labor and increase community involvement in these initiatives.