

## Transform-Action Project - JPIC initiatives that make a difference

### Passo Fundo, Brazil



In 2007, in response to the Brazilian Church's call, four religious groups in Passo Fundo – the Sisters of Notre Dame, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary Mediatrix, the Missionaries of the Holy Family and the Archdiocesan Caritas – formed a partnership called the **Transform-Action Project**. Its aim, core and mission is the care of life, nature and people. The initiative has had a positive impact on society, public authorities and the trash recyclers who are involved.

In order to develop successfully, **Transform-Action Project** created six programs:

**1) Socio-environmental Education:** This program, which is carried out in schools and other private and public places, aims to make people aware of the need to care for and preserve the environment, to recycle, and to dispose of waste properly.

**2) Cooperativism and Associativism:** In Passo Fundo, four groups of trash recyclers have been organized in cooperatives. The SNDs have a pastoral presence among these groups and as well as with 60 other recyclers who work in the city dump and who are, mostly women. Although they do not profess the Catholic faith, they live the evangelical values of fraternity and solidarity as expressed by a recycler in her testimony: *“I feel like a human being again after joining this cooperative and working to separate waste. Before, I was usually found in the psychiatric hospital and in the world of drugs. After I got here, I met good people who help and teach me. I gave up drugs and do not need medicine anymore. I am cured and I am very happy to be here, belonging to this group of workers”.*

**3) Children and Adolescents:** This program is designed to assist the children of the recyclers who live in the vicinity of the cooperatives. The sisters provide a place for them to socialize. They also promote after school classes, and often aid their families with food.

**4) Impact on Public Policies:** Members of the Project collaborate with the municipal government, as well as with various companies, entities and individuals in order to establish partnerships and agreements that will impact the Project.

**5) Communication and Marketing:** Members publicize various activities and raise funds, in addition to assisting the administrative teams of the individual cooperatives.

**6) Institutional:** Representatives of the partner entities hold monthly meetings in order to organize the activities of Transform-Action Project and to oversee the operation of the central office.

Our SND presence and work with the recyclers encourages them to notice and to celebrate the signs of God's presence in their lives. We hope that, in solidarity, the recyclers may go beyond the simple task of recycling materials. Hopefully they will be able to reframe and recycle their lives in order to transform their situation to include a life plan that will lead to social inclusion.

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