

(Re)Connecting Youth

Exchanging Global Lessons

DONCEL

Buenos Aires, Argentina

THE CHALLENGE

More than 15,000 youth in care live in state-run residential facilities in Argentina, largely as a result of abuse or neglect at home. Such youth are often ill-equipped for the reality that faces them when they are mandated by law to transition to independent living at the age of 18. Roughly 60% drop out of high school when they exit care, with 70% experiencing homelessness at some point once on their own. Until recently, the voices of young care leavers were largely missing from efforts to address their needs.

THE INITIATIVE

A civil society organization, Doncel was launched in 2004 to “prepare youth in care for the transition to independent living so they could develop as active citizens.” While in its early years, the organization focused on equipping youth for self-sufficiency through employment, over time its approach has evolved to include more holistic supports for youth exiting care.

Today, Doncel pursues three core strategies. First, it provides direct services to youth, including training and counseling youth for independent living and offering peer-to-peer support, both online and in person. Second, Doncel trains care-givers and provincial policy-makers on the needs and rights of youth. And third, it advocates for improved policies benefiting youth.

Doncel’s policy agenda is supported through research and publications, with efforts underway to improve the situation of youth exiting care in other countries through a Latin American regional network.

In 2010, Doncel began to integrate youth views and voices more formally into its work. A youth-led online portal, or E-Guide, launched by the organization in 2011, now serves as a clearinghouse of information for youth transitioning out of care. The youth group that led the effort has expanded with members now leading trainings benefiting their peers and staff within care institutions. Most recently, Doncel’s efforts to support and amplify youth voices contributed to a major legislative victory. In May 2017, a new national policy was approved in Argentina guaranteeing much-needed financial and emotional support for youth transitioning to independent living.

“Youth voice
needed to precede
the help we offered.”

—**Mariana Incarnato**
Founder & Executive Director
Doncel

IMPACT

Roughly 1,100 youth and adults (e.g., care providers, policy makers) benefited from Doncel programs in 2016. To date, Doncel’s E-Guide web platform has logged more than 10,000 unique visitors, with over, 2,100 followers subscribing to its Facebook page. With support from E-Guide members, Doncel collected critical data on the situation of care-leavers that was used to inform the passage of the new national policy.

To learn more, visit: iyfreconnectingyouth.org



Support
provided by

Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation

