

Do not  
open this  
brochure  
if you are  
not ready  
for  
challenges

EL DESAFIO  
FOUNDATION



**OUR ATTITUDE  
TURNS A  
PROBLEM INTO  
A CHALLENGE.**

**CHALLENGE  
YOURSELF.**

# Introduction

You opened this brochure, so we are guessing you like challenges. We do too. That's why we called our foundation 'The Challenge Foundation'. In Spanish, of course. We started El Desafío Foundation in 2005 with this positive attitude towards the increasing social problems and poverty in Argentina. Problems that affect many people, and specifically children. Children that deserve to face the world with the same attitude and create their own future. We felt the need to act, not because we thought doing 'charity' was the right thing, but because we believe we are all co-responsible for the situation in Argentina and the world in general. This idea was shared by many others who joined us.

We challenge the issues, and we challenge ourselves. El Desafío Foundation is not the kind of NGO that pretends to know it all. We have made mistakes in the past and probably will continue to make them. Having the courage to make mistakes is a key element in the process of finding better solutions. That being said, we don't believe we are 'helping people', we simply spark the fire of change by challenging the current situation by means of social innovation.

This brochure provides an overview of what we do. Seeing as how you love challenges, or perhaps you are merely curious, we can imagine you can hardly wait for this introduction to be over so you can begin digging into it. But we must advert you, only do so if you believe in the power of change. If you believe in the power of dreaming. You can only challenge and change if you dare to dream. And everyone has the right to dream his or her own dreams.

**Mario Raimondi & Jorn Wemmenhove – founders.**

# The challenge



Today in Argentina, 3 out of 10 people are living in impoverished conditions: no housing, no jobs, little access to a good health system, poor nutrition, weak education.

The result of this is a fragmented society with an ever growing gap between those who have and those who do not. The problem with structural poverty is that it triggers a lack of development, bad services, criminality, drug issues and insecurity on all levels. The solutions proposed and executed by policy makers are not tackling the root of the problems but rather the consequences of them. Due to this, the general society is lacking confidence and hope that social change is possible and a better reality for all is not just a dream.

El Desafío works with the vision of an inclusive society in where everyone is involved with the development of youth talents, who are key to the growth of a healthy country.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The human brain develops the most in the first two years of life and two factors that greatly influence this growth are: nutrition and stimulation.

# Rosario context and risks for youth:



Criminality, drug dealers operating and recruiting 'soldiers' within youth



30 homicides per 100.000 inhabitants (highest in the whole country)



No role models



45% of children living in poverty drop out of school



Girls living in poverty have higher chances of getting pregnant between 12 and 18 years old



No teeth by the average age of 28



# Our workplace / Where the magic happens



# Meet our founders



This is not a story of celebrities giving back to the community after they've retired. Nor is it a story of millionaires getting involved with social issues. And it is certainly not a story of comfort. When Mario and Jorn founded El Desafío, Jorn was only 21 years old and Mario 28. Jorn was finishing his masters degree at Utrecht University and Mario had two jobs. They used to work late hours, stretching into the night as well as most weekends and holidays. While in the Netherlands, over the course of 3 years, these two worked shoulder to shoulder to develop a sustainable concept based on empowering poverty stricken youth in Argentina, Mario's home country.



And it was not easy. The reaction from many was to take them as dreamers, the old romantic cliché of two young people trying to change the world. They had to create a concept, put together a team, get funding, dig into a social issue that was not their expertise, and convince everyone that they were not joking. Officially setting up the organization in 2005, today El Desafío is a role model for other non-profits thanks to their values of excellence, innovation, and creativity. So now you know why they called it The Challenge.

## FACT

El Desafío receives many awards for its social work, as do many of its team members individually for their own work within the organization. In 2013, Mario Raimondi received the most important national award for non profits, voted online by people's choice, in Argentina.

# Our team

To face the biggest challenges, we need the best trained staff. This is why we continually invest in the highest quality of training with experts in the area of education and innovation. We search for funding to travel to conferences, seminars and workshops, or, in some cases, organize for expert mentors to train us locally. Not only do we seek outside stimulus, but we have also designed a series of six intensive trainings for all our team members, including our volunteers.





# Women power: Luz Amuchastegui

In 2008 Luz (24 years old at the time) was working at General Motors HR department in Argentina. She was a good employee and a great prospect for the company. Luz studied Management and had a great career in front of her. But when she learnt about El Desafío from Mario (her former field hockey trainer) everything changed. She started by volunteering with small tasks, and in 2010 she decided to go for more. Against all odds, she quit her job and dedicated herself fully to El Desafío. It was not an easy thing to do: she had to trust that the organization would grow, all the while, receiving a below average salary. It was a strong bet and many people told her it was a stupid thing to do.



Today Luz is the program director of El Desafío and due to her support, we were able to implement dozens of community programs. Not only is she a tireless worker, she is also a role model for young girls and an inspiration for other women to empower. In 2013 she was selected by the US government as one of 17 women around the whole world named as Emerging Leaders. Thanks to this achievement she was

able to spend time in the United States where she focused on training and development that would make her social impact even greater. She was a panelist at ESPN W's Women + Sports Summit at the Institute of Peace and even had the chance to meet Oprah and tell her about our work.

While many people reproached her with things like, 'don't be crazy' and 'get a real job,' today we all benefit from the courage and passion it took her to follow her dream.

# Programs



**From  
7 to 11  
years old**

**Garabato (Doodling)**  
Art workshop and lots of fun

**Ritmo de Vida (Rythm of Life)**  
Hip hop, breakdance and other  
kind of dances

**Step One**  
Learning English through  
spontaneous play

**From  
12 to 14  
years old**

**Hockey Power**  
Field hockey for the girls

**Hay Equipito (Football)**  
Developing athletic identity and  
healthy habits through football

**Generacion C**  
Using technology to investigate

**Explorando Rosario  
(Exploring Rosario)**  
Discovering the city and the  
opportunities it entails

**Barrio al Mundo (From the  
District to the World)**  
Becoming a real artist and showing  
your work





# From 15 to 18 years old

**Hay Equipo (Football)**  
High level soccer training and going beyond your limits

**Ocho (Eight)**  
Cooking program with the top chefs of Rosario

**Distensionate (Electrician Program)**  
Learning the basics to be an electrician and getting to know the labour opportunities

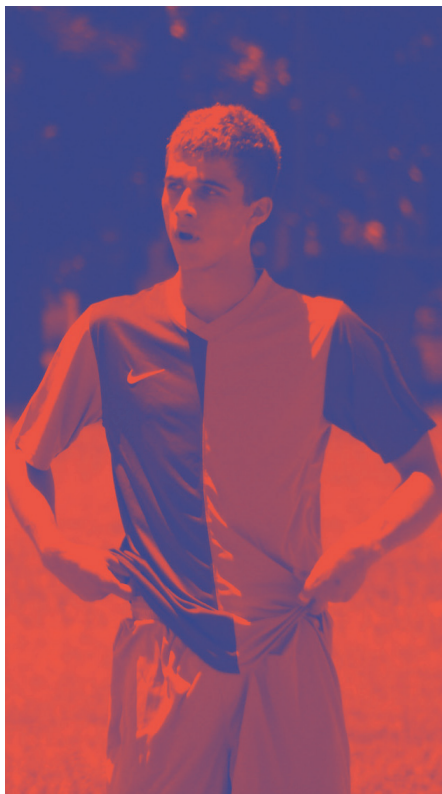
**Percussion (Drumming for Girls)**  
The voice of girls through drum circles

## DID YOU KNOW?

Most of the boys living in impoverished conditions in Rosario cannot think of anything other than being a professional football player in their future? Girls, on the other hand, can only think of becoming mother as soon as possible.

# Success story 1

## Martin



"I have something I want to share with you," Martin said in a chat with one of our coordinators. He had been part of our activities two years before, and after graduating from our electrician program - with flying colors - he moved with his family to another district. He was 17 at the time, and he kept his promise to stay in touch. We were sad when Martin left the neighborhood and could no longer attend the workshops at El Desafío. He was very committed, not only to the team, but also to the younger kids. So after opening a chat with that sentence we were curious and a little scared that the surprise wouldn't be a positive one. "I just got a job in the biggest electricity company of Rosario. I'm so happy and I want to thank all of you, without your support it wouldn't have been possible," he wrote.

We were speechless and touched. We had always believed in Martin's skills, but getting a job in the most important electrical company of the whole state was seriously a huge achievement. "I would like to share my experience with the younger kids of El Desafío, maybe they will feel inspired about it and realize they too can make things happen," he stated. After living alone with his mother and taking care of his younger sister for years, working in bad conditions and very badly paid, Martin finally got the chance to stand on his own two feet and start looking toward his future with hope and happiness.

# Success story 2

## Andy

Andy was sixteen when he first joined our football program. Skillful and talented as a player, he liked to play with his friends in the public parks, but had never had the chance to really train in a team environment. He lives in a shanty town together with his mother and three siblings, his father abandoned the family when he was just a child. After finishing primary school he started to work in construction, an industry that is booming in Rosario. Exhausted and losing focus, Andy quit his studies at high school. "Suddenly I realized I had nothing to do," he said. "Work didn't last long, I could not go back to school and all I was doing was sleeping all day, bored to death." Without plans and a clear path, Andy was vulnerable to drug dealers who tried to lure him into their network with the promise of easy money.

But Andy knew better, instead he joined the first El Desafío football team in 2011. Training with structure helped him to develop discipline, healthy habits and allowed him to dream about his future. His whole world changed, in early in 2013, when he was asked to assist the coach of our younger football team. He received training for it and was amazed when he got to know the concepts behind the training.

"I've never imagined that a football training involved so much planning and thought behind it. I loved it and I knew I wanted to be a football trainer and I knew what I had to do." With the help from his El Desafío mentor, Andy got back into high school and also started to work part time as an electrician after graduating in one of our programs. Today, Andy also works part time as a coach of El Desafío youngest football team. "I know I have a long way to go, but I want to be the best football trainer ever."





# Academia

"El Desafío Academy" is a platform of social innovation in which we engage people that are not necessarily living in an impoverished situation but hold the key of social change in their hands. At the Academia we promote civic participation with concrete actions: urban art to bring safety into the streets, public minilibraries to foster the care of public space, debates about the country's policies with leaders, presentations at schools, and a lot of voluntary work.



# Realists change nothing

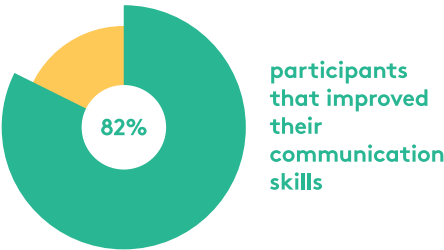
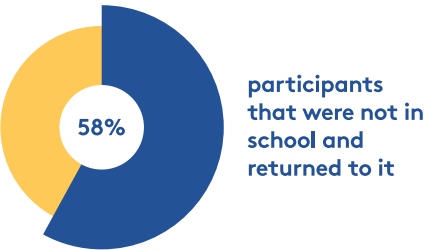
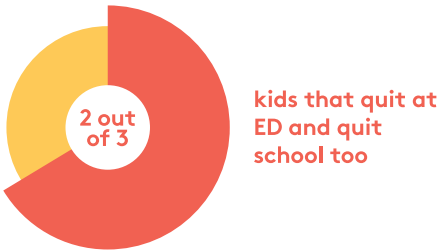
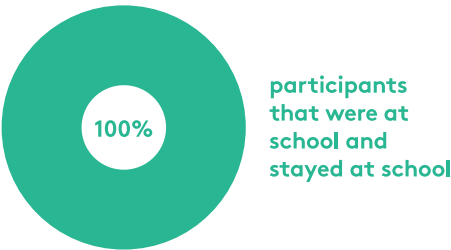
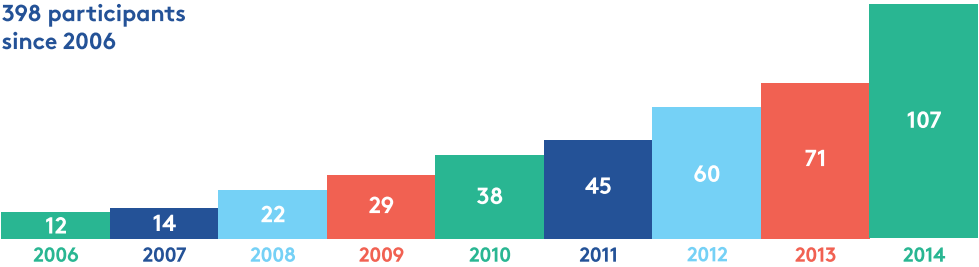
The statement 'Realists change nothing' is our reaction to what seems to be a common belief in Argentina. When we talk to people about social change we often get the advice to be realistic because, 'Argentina has always been like this, it will never change!'

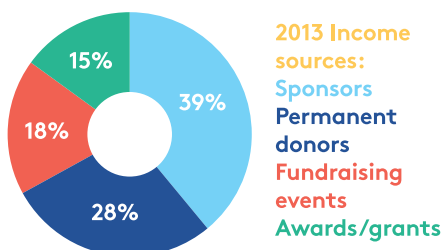
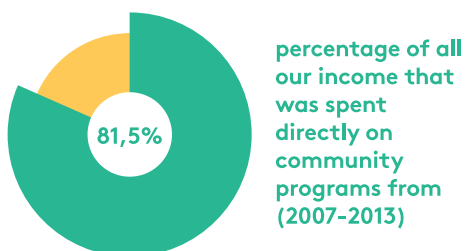
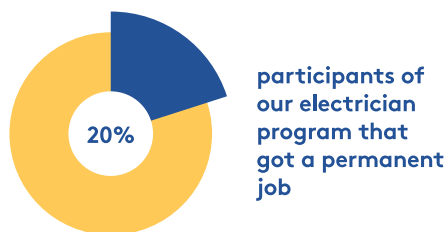
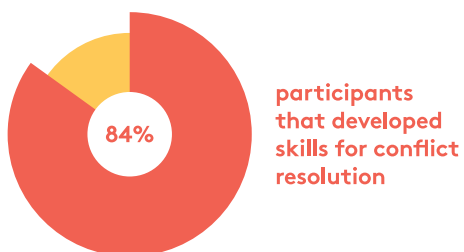
We guess it's a self-defense mechanism, but in fact if you are always realistic, nothing different will happen. Everything will remain the same. There will be no real change. So, for us, the key to social change is to be unrealistic, to see things differently. Argentina needs people who dare to leave realism aside, who dare to be creative, who dare to start again. Argentines are very creative and we are confident that together we can build a better future for everyone. This shirt is a way of reminding us of that.



# Results

398 participants  
since 2006





# Little taste of Argentina

Interested  
in hosting  
an event  
with us?



## Invite

Invite your friends, family or colleagues to your home for a relaxed and different afternoon.



## Taste

We'll treat your friends with argentinean wine, 'mate' and other typical delights.



## Connect

Meanwhile, we'll show some of the innovative social work we're doing in Argentina.



## Engage

If we do a good job (and we are pretty sure we will) we'll inspire you to share ideas to help us out.

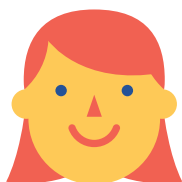


# Help us

While we count on many local Argentinean sponsors, the following international sponsors have also accepted the challenge:



Join us.  
There are many  
ways to help:



- Become a permanent donor with an automatic monthly donation (starts at 5 euros/10 dollars)
- Join the team by volunteering in your own country by promoting El Desafío and fundraising for us
- Work at a company, or own one? We have plenty of ideas to join forces, collaborate and develop a social responsibility program where we all win
- Help us to network and open doors for us

# Accept the challenge

[www.eldesafio.org](http://www.eldesafio.org)  
[info@eldesafio.org](mailto:info@eldesafio.org)  
[facebook.com/eldesafio](https://facebook.com/eldesafio)  
[twitter.com/eldesafio](https://twitter.com/eldesafio)