

Preventing abuse and commercial sexual exploitation: A successful project in southern Costa Rica

Marcela Sanabria Hernández¹ and Georgina Marín Gálvez²

1. Master's Degree in Evaluation of Development Programs and Projects from the University of Costa Rica (UCR) and Psychopedagogy from La Salle. Currently, she is in charge of the Chair of Psychopedagogy at UNED. E-mail: msanabria@uned.ac.cr
2. Master's Degree in Psychopedagogy from the UNED and Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. Currently in charge of the Chair of Educational Psychology at UNED. E-mail: gmaring@uned.ac.cr

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SUMMARY

The objective of this article is to present the project implemented by the School of Social Sciences and Humanities and the University Center of Ciudad Neily (both of the State Distance University, UNED) from 2007 to 2012, for the prevention of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation in the underage population of the southern zone of Costa Rica. This project was created with the intention of responding to a particular need that has been identified in the area, which is the attention to the various manifestations of abuse, mainly sexual and commercial sexual exploitation of children.

It also responds to the University's intention to link itself with the regions, as well as to accompany and attend to diverse problems that can be addressed from the university experience. The project began in 2007 with the development of workshops on the topic of sexual abuse and exploitation with a population of students in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades of general basic education, in schools in the cantons of Golfito and Corredores; and with funds from the National Council of Rectors (CONARE). Subsequently, the workshops were worked with the adolescent population.

Parallel to these workshops, radio programs were produced and broadcast by a local cultural radio station. These programs were produced by a group of young people that was formed as a result of the aforementioned workshops.

In 2008, 2009 and 2010, the experiences continued basically with the organization of workshops and youth groups; cinema forums and talks to parents were incorporated. Also, during this period, work began in educational centers to train teachers and administrative personnel.

Between 2011 and 2012, with funds from the Regional Inter-University Commission CRI-CONARE, the project "Integral Quality Training for the Educational Communities of the Southern Zone" was implemented in conjunction with the University of Costa Rica and the National University.

Based on all these experiences and upon determining the interest of the communities, it was decided to carry out the Intercátedras Project that would allow to combine the actions of different chairs of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities in a common theme, projected at a national level and with the participation of the student body.

The journey through these six years of experiences approaching the issue of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children allows us to identify the need that the issue of child protection should be a constant in our work as academics and even more so in a school with a human and social vision.

But this reality cannot remain only in the university environment; it must be managed so that the results of these projects can be presented to other instances and can serve as inputs to the policies that this country must develop in the area of childhood and adolescence.

Key words: commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), southern zone, prevention, abuse, successful project.

ABSTRACT

This article aims to present the project that has been running the School of Social Sciences and Humanities and the University Center of Ciudad Neily (both from the Universidad Estatal a Distancia, UNED), from 2007 to 2012, for the prevention of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation in the minor population of the Southern Zone of Costa Rica.

This project unfolds with the intention of responding to a particular need that has been identified in the area, as is attention to the various forms of abuse, particularly sexual and commercial sexual exploitation. Similarly responds to intentionality raised in the proper work of the University as its relationship with the regions as well as the support and attention to various problems that can be addressed from the college experience.

The project started in 2007 with the development of workshops on the subject of the abuse and sexual exploitation with a student population 4, 5 and 6 grade of basic general education in schools in the cantons of Golfito and Corredores ; funds and resources of the National Council of Rectors (CONARE) . Subsequently the workshops worked with adolescents.

Parallel to these workshops were produced radio programs broadcast by a radio culture of the area . These programs were developed by a group of young people was formed as a result of the above workshops.

For the years 2008, 2009 and 2010 remain basically experiences with workshops and youth groups ; theaters forums and talks to parents and mothers are incorporated.

Also in this period work in schools began training faculty and staff.

Between 2011-2012 and with funding from the Inter- Regional Commission CRI- CONARE , the project named "Integrated Quality Training for Educational Communities of the Southern Zone " held in association with the University of Costa Rica and is implemented National University . From all these experiences and to determine the interest of the community , it was decided to carry out the project Intercátedra ; that would combine the activities of different Departments of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities in a common theme , designed at national level and also with the partition of the student.

The journey through these 6 years of experience approaching the issue of child abuse and commercial sexual exploitation, to identify the need for the issue of child protection must be a constant in our work as academics and more in a school with human and social vision.

But this reality cannot be left solely at the university level, it must be managed so that the results of such projects can be exposed to other instances and can serve as inputs to policies relating to children and adolescents must develop this country.

Key words: commercial sexual exploitation of children, South Zone, prevention, abuse, successful project.

Introduction

rights.

Bearing in mind the exhortation of the Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED) to work for human rights in order to build an increasingly just society, the School of Social Sciences and Humanities (ECSH), in conjunction with the Centro Universitario de Ciudad de Santiago de Compostela and the University Center of Ciudad de Compostela, is working to promote human

Neily developed a series of projects and initiatives framed within the theme of preventive work in favor of children and adolescents in the southern part of the country, mainly in the cantons of Corredores and Golfito. This article offers a thematic review of the main concepts that are considered in the approach to commercial sexual exploitation of children, as well as a reference to

national studies that accompany the initiatives developed by the governing bodies in the area of children and adolescents.

On the other hand, the trajectory of all the actions carried out by UNED3 between 2007 and 2011 is presented through the project route, defined in the following stages:

- 2007 to 2008: "First Steps".
- 2009 to 2010: "Projecting to the community".
- 2011 to 2012: "Strengthening the process".

For each of these stages, a summary of the project implemented, the target population at which it was aimed, what was achieved and the products that resulted from these actions.

At the end, the article establishes an analysis in the form of lessons learned from the perspective of the children's and adolescents' own vision of their reality; and from that of the project managers, who end up making their own demystification process in the face of the atrocity of the subject and thus reconceptualizing the need to work with those people, institutions or organizations that are involved in the project.



Figure 1. Acosa (2001). Administrative and political sub-regions. Osa conservation areas. Retrieved from <<https://www.inbio.ac.cr/ecomapas/acosau/generalidades.htm>>

3. Represented by ECSH and the University Center of Ciudad Neily.

instances that become protective of such a vulnerable population.

A section of conclusions is also included, where the main idea is the importance of being able to implement experiences that meet particular needs (such as the topic in question), as part of the extension projects developed by universities.

Background

As mentioned in the previous section, UNED has been developing actions through the implementation of projects in favor of children and adolescents in the southern zone (Corredores and Golfito cantons) of the country since 2007, in coordination with the University Center of Ciudad Neily.

As can be seen in the figure on the previous page, Corredores and Golfito are cantons in the province of Puntarenas (Brunca Region), located in the southern part of the country near the border with Panama. The canton of Corredores is headed by Ciudad Neily.

Both cantons have been catalogued as areas of great natural wealth but at the same time places where poverty, child vulnerability and conditions that threaten integral human development prevail.

As indicated by Arias and Sánchez (2010: 27), the region has high levels of poverty and extreme poverty, as well as illiteracy (p. 41), which has a direct impact and puts the underage population at high risk of vulnerability.

According to Claramunt, commercial sexual exploitation is considered by the ILO as a crime comparable to slavery and forced labor (2005: 4) and one of the worst forms of child labor; therefore, it is considered a flag- lo for a population that requires constant and direct attention in terms of rights.

In addition to the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children, it is necessary to refer to the experiences of sexual abuse suffered by the underage population, which although it is true not only in the case of children, but also in the case of adolescents.

The fact is that these responses to rural populations do tend to be understood as a certain degree of "normality" (in these areas) based on the patriarchal and adult-centric behaviors that justify them.

Child sexual abuse is considered a form of child maltreatment that violates the dignity of the human being and its effects affect biological, psychological, social and emotional aspects. It can be conceptualized as the use of a minor for the sexual gratification of an adult or group of adults (Lago and Céspedes, 2005: 16). If the abuse is carried out by a family member with a certain degree of consanguinity, the act is known as incest.

It is important to bear in mind that in the case of sexual exploitation, minors are used for commercial purposes; this includes pedophilia, trafficking for sex tourism or pornography through the Internet, among others (Lago and Céspedes, 2005: 17).

In Costa Rica, actions have been taken in various governmental and private spheres to create a common front to mitigate or minimize to the maximum extent possible this plague that threatens one of the greatest assets of Costa Rican society, its underage population.

Some of these initiatives include the consolidation of the National Commission against Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CONACOES), created in 1996; the Law against Commercial Sexual Exploitation (7899) and the Law to Strengthen the Fight against Commercial Sexual Exploitation (Law 7594) (2007). This is evidence of Costa Rica's interest in becoming a country that protects the rights of its underage population, both in terms of prevention and punishment.

Project route

From the beginning, the project has opted for preventive work against abuse and commercial sexual exploitation through workshops and educational activities with children and adolescents.

First steps (2007-2008)

In February 2007, the School of Social Sciences and Humanities of the Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED), with economic resources from the National Council of Rectors' Funds (CONARE), began work against sexual exploitation in the southern zone of Costa Rica.

Upon learning about the area and its needs, the historical elements that characterize it as a region that has had to face great changes at a productive level and therefore at a social and economic level emerge strongly rooted. One consequence of these changes has been the lack of educational and employment opportunities linked to the stay and exit of the banana activity and the absence of a successful development strategy.

alternative for the region (ILO, 2005).

With the passage of time, new development options have emerged in the area, such as tourism, with the creation of new marinas and the hotel infrastructure that this activity requires. However, the new opportunity also brings its challenges, as it may tend to promote sex tourism and thus perpetuate the historical roots that have caused so much damage and pain to the female population and children.

Precisely when considering the situation of vulnerability in which children and adolescents live, the need emerges for systematic preventive work that generates processes to build protective skills in this population. To this end, the project included work with boys and girls in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades of some schools in the area. It also included the formation of a youth group aimed at people who were not enrolled in the formal education system.

In May 2007, we worked with a population of 867 school-age children and adolescents. The methodology used consisted of a series of biweekly workshops with each group. The radio forum technique was used, so that a selection of radio programs was made specifically for the under-age population, with topics aimed at developing self-knowledge, self-esteem, the capacity for self-determination and the capacity for self-esteem.

The program also focused on the prevention of grandparents, commercial sexual exploitation and drug addiction. Topics such as the prevention of grandparents, commercial sexual exploitation and drug addiction were also developed. The design of each workshop included recreational activities, materials and surveys that at the time made it possible to learn about the reality of the population in relation to the theme of the workshop. At the end of the workshop, an evaluation was carried out so that participants could express their opinion about their experience of the workshop.

The experience continued in 2008 with a population of 562 children and adolescents from the participating schools. We also worked with bi-weekly workshops for each group, the main theme of which was the code of the rights of children and adolescents. It is believed that knowledge of this code enables minors to defend themselves from various abuses, including commercial sexual exploitation.

For the development of this project, we had the support of several institutions in the area, such as the Regional Headquarters of the Ministry of Public Education, which provided spaces and working hours with groups from the following schools: Licenciado Alberto Echandi, Río Nuevo, Central de Coto 47, Santa Marta, Líder de Paso Canoas and Excelencia Confraternidad.

With respect to work with young people, the Youth Connection Group was created for teenagers in the canton of Corredores who were not enrolled in the formal education system. They were invited to participate in the group through a radio announcement broadcast on the Corredores Cultural Radio Station. The group started with 12 young people, three of them coming from the area. The objective of the work was always in line with the prevention of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation and consisted of providing basic training for the elaboration of radio programs. Workshops were held for the development of research skills, preparation of radio scripts, voice management and imposition, basic elements for planning and carrying out interviews, as well as workshops on aspects of the radio program, such as the

development of the radio program and the
development of the radio program itself.

The workshops included more technical topics such as the use of tape recorders, photographic cameras and the production of radio programs. In addition, personal development workshops were held on topics such as self-esteem, friendship, sexuality and values. The group work made it possible to create the name of the group and to decide that the target population for the radio programs should be young people, as well as to define the topics of greatest interest to this population. In 2007 Conexión Juvenil produced six radio programs. In 2008, the training process continued through workshops and a new series of 10 radio programs was recorded and edited. All the programs were broadcast through the Corredores Cultural Radio Station at times that were accessible to the region's youth audience.

Throughout this process with the Conexión Juvenil group, we had the technical support of the *Onda UNED* Program and the Emisora Cultural de Corredores.

In Puerto Jimenez, the Asociación Rescate de Valores (a religious association whose objective is to promote value-related issues in the community) requested that the project be developed for the community and was responsible for bringing together children and adolescents, as well as some adults.

As part of the prevention of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation, a series of training workshops were held in Puerto Jimenez for a group of 12 members. In addition, workshops were held for a group of 18 adults, including community leaders and school administrative personnel. The proposed goal was to strengthen the leadership of these people so that they promote respect for the rights of the underage population and, as leaders, contribute to the eradication of both abuse and sexual exploitation.

All the work carried out within the framework of this initiative was planned in accordance with the objectives proposed by the National Commission against Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CONACOES). In addition, it is important to highlight the linkage in this process with the University

The National Government, whose contribution consisted of the Zero Desertion project as a preventive way to eliminate this type of problem that afflicts society.

Projecting to the community (2009-2010)

In 2009, we consolidated our preventive work with 306 children and adolescents through workshops and educational activities of a playful nature.

The youth group formerly known as Conexión Juvenil grew with new members and by decision of its members decided to call it Metamorphosis, a name that symbolized the process of growth they were undergoing. The formative and training process continued through workshops. Metamorphosis was also present in activities such as scientific fairs and accountability, spaces in which they disseminated the importance of the rights of children and adolescents, as well as the risk posed by both abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children. During the year, 14 radio programs were produced and broadcast by the Emisora Cultural de Corredores radio station.

At the same time, the work in the community of Puerto Jimenez allowed the development of several film forums with a large participation of 35 people. The topics addressed always revolved around personal growth and the rights of children and adolescents, aware that these processes provide the necessary tools for the protection of this population.

Another aspect of the work carried out was with 10 families in Ciudad Neily, where 29 cases of children and adolescents were identified in situations of vulnerability due to the high rate of poverty, family disintegration, unemployment and low schooling. With these people, it was vitally important to develop certain skills so that the minors would be better protected and cared for by their families.

In 2010, the Metamorfosis youth group reached a total of 30 participants, which facilitated the increase of its presence in community and UNED activities, always with the slogan of promoting the prevention of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, it was possible to provide training spaces with topics inherent to the affective and sexual development of this age group. These topics were also used in the production of fourteen new radio programs.

As a result of the work carried out in the southern zone and the magnitude of the problem of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation, there was also a desire to involve UNED students in this fight through the Intercátedras Project, The main objective of the project was to facilitate the exchange of information on the prevention of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation among the chairs of History, Social Work, Civic Education and Geography, Educational Psychology and Sustainable Tourism of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities. The main objective was to facilitate student participation in the social work of the University, raise awareness of the problem of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children, create a commitment to the fight against this slavery, and promote the participation of students in the social work of the University, raise awareness of the problem of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children and create a commitment to the fight against this slavery.

and also to promote lines of research in the institution.

To achieve the above objective, UNED students were assigned, as part of some subjects, a task, research or activity that would bring students into contact with the reality of the problem from different areas: abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children from a historical point of view, its consequences from a psychological point of view, preventive work seen from the perspective of social work and within the process of civic education, as well as the role of sustainable tourism in the implementation or eradication of this scourge.

After four years, in 2010, the initiative closes a culminating stage of its life. The work carried out, the goals achieved and the products obtained can be summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

As a product of this stage and for the dissemination of results, a photographic exhibition entitled New Horizons of Hope and its respective catalog were prepared for presentation in the various regions of the country, either at the explicit request of any institution or for any activity or celebration related to the theme.

TABLE 1
Summary of project components (2007-2010)

Populatio	Number of people	Worksh	Impact
17	Schools2169 Children and Adolescents	610 Workshops	Commercial sexual exploitation made visible as problem Development of protective attitudes Improved self-esteem and growth in values Development of a sense of belonging
Teaching	Directors	10 Directors	

260
Teachers

8 Trainings Enhanced awareness of ESC aiding the psychosexual development of the adolescent population Greater clarity in the reporting process

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interchairs project



TABLE 1 (Continued...)
Summary of project components (2007-2010)

Populatio	Number of people	Worksh	Impact
Metamorphosis Youth Connection Radio Group	62 Adolescent	Adolescents63 work 44 Radio programs	Adolescents with better self-perception Comprehensive vision of sexuality Skills in researching topics of interest Skills in radio program production ESC awareness process Methodology for the prevention of ESC
Puerto Jimenez Community	80 people20	Working sessions	
Local tourist guides	60 CSF	people2	working sessionsGuides committed to the fight against Development of protective skills for themselves and their businesses

Source: Marín, Castillo and Villalobos (2010).

TABLE 2
Intercátedras Project Summary (2010)

Project: Let's Bring Our Students Closer to the Prevention of Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation	
	ActivityImpact
Project Intercátedras: Let's Bring Our Students Closer to the Prevention of Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation	600 future teachers committed to the fight against commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.
Active participation in the CONACOES of Ciudad Neily	UNED positioned as a living force in the community. Contribution of workshops and trainings linked to the local anti-violence network.
Process of elaboration and publication of the itinerant exhibition of photographs of the project entitled New Horizons of Hope.	Dissemination of the experience as a model and proposal for preventive work. This exhibit is available for presentation upon request.

Source: Marín, Castillo and Villalobos (2010).

Strengthening the process (2011-2012)

In 2011, the project continued under the name of Integral Quality Training for the Educational Communities of the Southern Zone, carried out in conjunction with the University of Costa Rica and the National University, with the financial support of funds from the Regional Inter-University Commission (CRI- CONARE).

This project, from the initiative developed by the UNED, was developed based on the following objectives:

- Motivate and train students from different educational cycles about the importance of education as a tool for their economic and social development and future and the achievement of full citizenship, within the framework of the construction of their life project.
- To train in-service teaching and administrative personnel at the different levels of the educational system for pedagogical innovation and the improvement of educational environments, by means of topics such as health and education.

environment, interculturality, risk, gender, rights and human development, promoting the contextualization and relevance of educational policy.

- Intensify actions with parents so that they, in turn, contribute to encourage the participation of their children in the educational process, favoring their permanence in it and reducing dropout or expulsion.

To achieve these objectives, workshops were held with sixth and seventh grade students, workshops with parents of seventh grade students, and meetings with primary and secondary school teachers and administrative personnel from the Alberto Echandi School and the Ciudad Neily High School, respectively.

On the other hand, a diagnostic study was carried out to identify the perception of the sixth grade and seventh grade students regarding the process of articulation between primary and secondary school.

Specifically, the actions yielded the following results.

TABLE 3
Execution of the Workshops at the Alberto Echandi School, section 6-4 (2011)

	Number workshops	Population
I can be what I want and I intend to	4	484
Study techniques	4	87
Drugs, violence, sex and social pressure	4	92
Total	12	263

TABLE 4
Implementation of the Workshops at the Liceo Académico de Ciudad Neily, seventh grade, section 8 (2011).

	Number workshops	Population
I can be what I want to be and what I set my mind to be	10	192
To school, pure life with my	8	153

Source: A. Espinoza (2011)

Five workshops on the development of emotional intelligence were also held for teachers and administrative personnel, with a total of 150 participants. The same theme was developed in workshops for parents.

For the team executing the project, it was of great importance to know how the educational institution becomes a protective factor for the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of minors. In this sense, the analysis of the diagnostic information led to the identification of those variables that make the educational center a suitable space for the growth and integral development of children and adolescents.

All this information has been documented in the article "Analysis of the perception of sixth and seventh year students regarding their entry to secondary education" (Marín and Sanabria, 2013). This article shows how important the educational institution is for children and adolescents in these districts. For the students, the desire to attend secondary school is very clear, because it offers them a space for social interaction and learning that is essential to their life project.

Since 2011 and up to the present, the project has been followed up by the initiative of several chairs of the Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED) and with the support of the Rector's Office, since there was no budget from the funds of the Comisión Nacional de Rectores for its continuity.

In this new stage, the Intercátedras Project seeks to involve the student body and the administrative and teaching staff of UNED in order to encourage their commitment against this type of slavery, under the slogan "It is everyone's business". This initiative was built and carried out with the participation of most of the chairs, programs and extension area of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, and had the support of the Rector's Office and the *UNED Onda* Program.

This initiative made it possible to celebrate for the first time at the institutional level the World Day Against the Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Minors and Trafficking in Persons.

Lessons learned

The five-year process of work to prevent the abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of minors in the southern zone has yielded countless lessons learned. Among the most significant are the following:

From the perspective of childhood and adolescence

When children and adolescents have the opportunity to learn about the issue and understand it as one of the modern forms of slavery, they are able to make a judgment and consider preventive actions in favor of themselves and their peers.

As evidenced by the words of a young man who participated in the project during his school years, this should be a permanent space: "I have recommended it to some friends to help them, it is a very nice and different experience, I think it would be very good for them to learn about the things or the world that surrounds them, of course before they start in the world of evil, it was very good for me" (survey conducted in 2010).

In addition, it highlights the importance of having youth spaces that allow them to address issues of interest to them in a framework of recreation, respect and acceptance of their opinions. This can be seen in the survey conducted, as the participants emphasize "that it was a group of young people united to help future young people".

From the project managers

One of the lessons learned has been to recognize the position that the community assumes in the face of this slavery, which it considers to be a frequent practice and part of its daily life.

Based on this recognition, there is a need to work on this issue from a different perspective, focusing on children and adolescents, who have the potential to bring about social change. According to UNICEF (2011), investing in children and adolescents implies that, from a social point of view, it offers the possibility of ensuring the fulfillment of their rights and, therefore, the well-being and equity of this population. Likewise, for the country, this social investment is projected in the region's economic and productive growth.

The potential of children and adolescents to become protagonists in the fight against abuse and commercial sexual exploitation has also been recognized, as long as they are sensitized to the issue. Proof of this is the contribution of the Metamorphosis group and the participation of some of these young people in cantonal associations or groups that address the issue.

The educational institution becomes an ally in prevention, as long as it becomes an attractive space for children and adolescents, which means that it offers the conditions for their integral growth.

The teaching and administrative staff of the educational institutions in the area should become a strategic ally in the prevention of these scourges. These personnel should be properly prepared for the processes of reporting and dealing with these problems, especially when they may be exposed to threats and assaults that threaten their own lives, their families or their belongings.

Another learning has to do with the radio as a means of communication, which became a fundamental element to approach the community in such a large area and thus disseminate preventive messages against commercial sexual exploitation in a creative and attractive way.

The Universidad Estatal a Distancia responds to a social demand congruent with its mission, which is committed to academic excellence, the development of culture and science,

art and human rights for the construction of a just society and a culture of peace (UNED, 2011).

Conclusions

The historical background of the project for the Prevention of Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in the Southern Zone of Costa Rica, which later gave rise to the Intercátedras Project known as Es Asunto de Todos y Todas, allows us to outline some conclusions that in turn become starting points for new fields of action in favor of children and adolescents and as pending challenges that future professionals in education and in general in the Social Sciences should take up again.

The first conclusion to be drawn from this initiative is that the care and appreciation of children and adolescents and their rights is a pending task in Costa Rican society. It should be remembered that children and adolescents in Costa Rica require greater care and support both at the family and social level and at the governmental level.

This task, which is linked to the need to break historical chains protected by interest groups that are threatened by the awareness and integral development of minors and their families, is achieved in part through preventive work with initiatives, programs or projects, such as the examples presented in this article.

With respect to the issue of prevention of abuse and commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, it is clear that it involves a constant struggle that must involve all social sectors, from the government to the family, from educators to employers, and therefore it is necessary to undertake preventive work at the national level, focusing on the children and adolescents themselves, who will be the ones who can promote a society free of this type of problem.

It is of utmost importance to promote educational work with adults on topics such as the psychology of child development, the rights of children and adolescents, among others.

others, which allow for the development of respectful and educational interpersonal relationships with this population.

Greater attention should be paid to the preparation of future parents, who should forge in their children principles and values and a healthy self-esteem that will enable them to protect themselves from this type of scourge.

It is also important to promote in Costa Rican society the capacity to defend the principles and values and the rights of minors by means of denunciation. Creating and developing this culture will in turn imply the need for more responsive justice systems.

Analyzing the project as an experience of the UNED, as a distance university, with a different pedagogical mediation, it is worth highlighting the importance of the ability to constantly reinvent itself to find ways to sensitize and involve its students in the fight against this type of social problems that afflict children and adolescents.

The Intercátedras Project is a creative effort that, in addition to involving so many young people, also brings together a significant number of students and academics, which makes it a successful educational experience that allows the integration of different areas of university activities, such as extension, research and teaching.

It is also important to highlight the role of the University Center of Ciudad Neily, which detected the problem of sexual abuse and exploitation in the area and took the necessary steps to promote this initiative. It also provides logistical support and constant accompaniment to the managers in their work.

Given the capacity of this initiative to create spaces for prevention, participation and training on issues such as abuse and exploitation

The study of commercial sex education in childhood and adolescence marks a path to be followed and improved in distance education.

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