

Honduras
Government of the Honduran Republic
In the Frame of the Second World Congress on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
Teodolinda Pineda

THE HONDURAN CHILDREN AND FAMILY INSTITUTE

The Honduran Children and Family Institute (IHNFA) is a public autonomous agency, whose mission is to provide integral protection to children and complete family integration. Our legislation defines the IHNFA as the coordinating agency of public and private sectors for promotion, implementation and supervision of public policies for children and families.

In order to fulfill its pledges, the IHNFA has organized the structure of its programs and services within three main action lines:

- **Familial Community Development:** preventive in nature. There is support for the following: childcare services during parent's working hours, early stimulation and nourishment, and vocational workshops for adolescents and socio-familial orientation, including schools for parents, couple orientation and promotion of youth organization.
- **Protection and Social Intervention:** implies specific actions to care for and look for suitable solutions for those cases defined in our legislation as at social risk, it is worth noting the lack of a family or legal guardian, ill-treatment, abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents.
- **Reeducation of adolescents** that have broken criminal laws sent by competent judicial authorities to the IHNFA. The IHNFA is charged with reeducation, with or without confinement.

The fight against commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and against those cases at social risk

IHNFA's actions include the following:

- Socio-familial orientation in a preventive context, aimed at avoiding threats and violation of children's rights, i.e. expulsion from home, begging, early child labor and child exploitation, both in workplaces and under the worst forms of child labor and sexual exploitation.
- Direct care in cases sent to the IHNFA due to social risk. It is worth noting ill treatment (including promotion and improper invitations of sexual nature), sexual abuse strictly speaking and abandonment of the child, in such a way that the absence of normal alternatives pushes them into economic and sexual exploitation.

Despite the fact that Honduras has no specific care programs for commercial sexual exploitation, recently the IHNFA is coordinating the establishment of an inter-institutional committee to prepare an action plan covering the different issues connected to the problem. Upon finishing with the Governmental Congress, the IHNFA is promoting the submission of results from several studies conducted recently, and will promote an action plan of urgent implementation to allocate enough resources to start the pilot project against commercial sexual exploitation of children. Along these lines, the proposal is that actions should fight adult delinquency that promotes, facilitates and exploits children, and to take steps towards ensuring immediate transitory protection of detected cases and the provision of alternatives for familial integration and substitution of income sources.

Summary of the main strategies

- Inter-institutional coordination aimed at achieving coherence, joint efforts and resources.
- Coordination with municipal governments, to plan and manage actions,

service provision and social participation.

- Strengthening the participation of civil society, to identify the main problems and set priorities.
- Methodology, that sets an intervention process with concrete social intervention motives and goals, so as to enable application of immediate, medium-term and long-term protective measures.

In this category those who have family support have been transferred to the Familial Community Care sub-program where they receive therapeutic help, - individual, group or family -, aimed at modifying situations and behaviors that resulted in their becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Others, who cannot be reinserted in their families, are transferred to NGOs where

they will receive education, health care, social orientation and pre-vocational training.

- When children or adolescents have drug related problems and have family support they are sent to hospital during the daytime for specialized care.
- Where there are consequences of STDs /HIV the child or adolescent is transferred to Health Care Centers where they receive suitable treatment.
- Pregnant girls / adolescents are transferred to the Clinic for Pregnant Adolescents.

Target population:

From 1998 until 2001, the IHNFA has acted in 3244 cases of individuals at social risk. Approximately 1% is due to sexual exploitation:

Year	Age	Cases
1998	0-3	71
	4-6	64
	7-10	100
	11-14	131
	15-18	128
Total		494

Year	Age	Cases
1999	0-3	92
	4-6	115
	7-10	272
	11-14	366
	15-18	251
Total		1096

Year	Age	Cases
2000	0-3	126
	4-6	101
	7-10	196
	11-14	269
	15-18	328
Total		1020

Year	Age	Cases
2001	0-3	70
	4-6	76
	7-10	111
	11-14	163
	15-18	214
Total		634

FINAL REMARKS

- Despite the fact that there are no specific care programs for commercial sexual exploitation of children in Honduras, it is worth noting that within the frame of general care for social risk programs and services, there are specific actions serving as a starting point to tackle the issue.
- It is important to point out the fact that intervention programs and social protection of the child who has been rescued from exploitation are not enough. The legal system should undertake all actions necessary to fight against the adult crime. Along this line the role of criminal investigation institutions at national and international levels are extremely important.
- Undoubtedly Honduras is a poor country and its legal system has loops, conditions that foster criminality. In Honduras we are moving towards a government of law, developing a democratic system and fighting poverty, actions that will improve the social context where these practices are found.