

Project number	39907236
Title	EPASI

Countries

Argentina

Summary

Between 2004 and 2010, the Pentecostal Church and Skärstad Finspång presented, together with ACEAD (Evangelical Christian Association Assembly of God) in Tucumán, four project proposals to PMU InterLife; the proposal "Childhood Protagonist in the Change of Structures: Creating Critical Thought in Childhood" (2009) was funded by Radiohjälpen and was not taken into account in this assessment. The proposals submitted and approved by PMU InterLife and implemented by EPASI are the following:

- 2004-2005 No 11104001 "Reaching Children with Child Abuse Prevention"
- 2005-2008 No 11105021 "Promotion, Implementation and Defense of the Rights of the Child in Northern Argentina. Transforming Social Policy to Protect Them Against All Forms of Violence "
- 2010-2011 No 11109001 "Methodological Dissemination of Child Sexual Abuse Prevention"

At the end of 2010 PMU, InterLife decided to send consultant Miriam Winroth Mondragón to assess three of the four projects implemented by EPASI. The purpose was to analyze the interventions' model and implementation strategy and provide a framework of general recommendations for leading a process more focused on promoting and defending the rights of children and youth.

The consultant visited San Miguel de Tucumán, Tucumán province, Argentina, from April 10-20, 2011. She conducted an evaluation workshop, which was supplemented by observations made during the visit to one of the project areas (this because the project is ending), and also interviewed various local actors: beneficiaries, parents, teachers, leaders of other NGOs, local authorities, the judiciary, etc.

The projects' essential points are very relevant, and the projects have met their goals and objectives:

- Given the results obtained by EPASI interventions, and because child sexual abuse is not a phenomenon that occurs only in Latin America, it is recommended that PMU InterLife promote the adaptation EPASI's materials and its respective training model to other cultures, without forgetting Sweden.
- There is a commitment by authorities and civil society to EPASI's work, which lays the foundation for networking and for various actors to join forces and economic and technical resources to prevent child sexual abuse.
- The interventions take a very broad approach with the danger of wearing thin. To have a greater impact and be able to measure short and long-term results, future resources should be dedicated to identified strategic areas or activities and to specific target groups, seeking alignment and synergies among the intervention's different components.
- For future interventions to be implemented systematically, it is important to prepare a strategic plan with its respective annual operating plans that define objectives, indicators and activities. It is also necessary to prepare a monitoring plan to measure progress and evaluate the process.

The intervention model for protecting children and preventing Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

At the macro level: Advocacy, awareness-building and structural/cultural change

- Together with other actors, running media campaigns to build awareness about problem of

child sexual abuse and other forms of violence against children

- Pushing for structural changes by preparing bills, seeking allies to present them in legislative bodies (local parliament)
- Sensitizing, raising awareness and training local and provincial justice

operators (police, lawyers and judges)

At the micro level: Prevention efforts in the target group and work to restore and do justice for child survivors of child sexual abuse and their families

- Involve children and adolescents as well as parents, teachers and professionals to turn them into agents of education, training and prevention
- Interventions should have a clear focus on the family, promoting the active participation of the whole nuclear family and family environment.
- Promoting interdisciplinary collaboration among the various entities involved in detecting abuse and restoring children and their families, to ensure the protection and prompt attention to victims
- Having expertise in the psycho-social area as well as in investigation and law

Networking and cooperation

- Building and strengthening relationships with authorities, institutions and NGOs
- Taking advantage of the favorable human rights environment to make its institutional voice heard, raise awareness in civil society about the problem of child abuse and generate dynamics of cooperation among and with institutions concerned about and active in the field of defending and promoting the Rights of the Child.

The Rights of the Child

- Giving a rights approach to projects for children and youth
- Teaching very young boys and girls about the Rights of the Child, so that they know their rights and responsibilities and what they mean in practice

Civic role of churches defending the Rights of the Child

- Encouraging the involvement of more churches in defending the Rights of the Child, training preventers in churches and motivating church leadership to support them in the task, thus taking advantage of the denominations' and churches' structures and human resource

Recommendations A. Intervention model

At the macro level: Advocacy, Awareness-Building and Structural/ Cultural Changes

- To raise awareness about the problem of child sexual abuse and other forms of violence directed at children, the media have a crucial role. If one can build awareness and motivate the media to transmit content focused on building awareness and educating the population, they have the potential to create a culture of respect for human rights and and Rights of the Child.
- EPASI has made an impact through the media and achieve even more by reactivating its network of institutions in Tucumán, including the Secretary of Human Rights, which has resources for advocacy campaigns.
- To achieve structural changes and changes in legislation, it is necessary to have competent professionals in the judiciary (lawyers and political scientists) or to network with institutions that have this kind of human resource. Sensitization and awareness-building directed at justice operators would result in a more considerate and humane approach to victims of abuse and a more efficient handling of their cases.
- EPASI has lobbied lawmakers for changes in the protocol for victims of child sexual abuse to keep children from being re-victimized, forced to testify again and again, deepening their traumatic experience. However, this work is long term and requires a lot of lobbying and persistence.

At the micro level: Prevention at the level of target groups and work to restore and do justice for child survivors of child sexual abuse and their families

- For the work of child sexual abuse prevention to have an impact, it is important to involve children and adolescents as well as parents and professionals. Interventions should have a clear focus on the family, involving the immediate family (parents) to turn them into educators, trainers and preventers.
- In its preventive work, EPASI has touched each of the above-mentioned target

groups, which has strengthened its intervention model. The broad approach has created a demand for training among various social actors.

- In detecting victims of sexual abuse and restoring children and their families, it is important to promote interdisciplinary collaboration among the different entities involved in the detection process, such as judicial authorities, the Health Ministry, schools and NGOs, in order to ensure the victims' protection and a quick response. EPASI networks with key institutions in Tucumán, where they refer cases to each other. For example, EPASI remits judicial cases to the bar, while other institutions send child victims of sexual abuse to EPASI's prevention workshops and therapy.
- In interventions dealing with prevention and care for child survivors of sexual abuse, there must always be expertise in the psycho-social area. This may include theoretical and practical knowledge about child sexual abuse and treating survivors of abuse as well as ways to prevent children from being victims of sexual violence
- If the intervention is aimed at doing justice for the victim and convicting the perpetrator, it is important to have professionals such as a lawyer and an investigator to expedite the judicial process, which tends to stagnate.
- EPASI has a team of highly skilled psycho-social agents and workshop facilitators that has made an impact in Tucumán and neighboring provinces. However, the team expressed the need for a full-time lawyer to follow up on cases. For lack of human resources, it has been difficult to obtain convictions in paradigmatic cases handled by EPASI.

B. Networking and cooperation

Building and strengthening relationships with other NGOs

Argentina's civil society is in a growth process. After the long shadow cast by years of repression and control exercised by military governments, the establishment of democracy has led to the rebirth of

- Argentinian civil society. One oldest and best organized sectors of society is the one that defends human rights. This is because of the intense work involved in searching for the "disappeared," fighting military impunity and obtaining restitution for victims of repression. The fight by human rights NGOs has established awareness and a human rights culture in Argentina that is widely accepted by the public.
- Thus, institutions such as EPASI should take advantage of this favorable framework to make its institutional voice heard, raise awareness in civil society about the problem of child abuse and generate dynamics of cooperation among and with institutions interested and active in defending and promoting the Rights of the Child.

C. The Rights of the Child

It is important that projects directed at children and young people have a rights approach.

- Children are recognized as subjects of rights when they are educated to participate, express their views and participate in decisions having to do with them. The term active citizenship is used to describe the knowledge, skills and competencies that must be developed in children and young people for them to know their rights, identify the problems affecting them and their communities and, through debate and discussion, pose solutions to these problems.
- Teach the Rights of the Child to children from an early age, so they know their rights and responsibilities and what these mean in practice. It is important for civic education to begin in preschool and early elementary grades for children, from a young age, to feel that their voice has value and that the actions and decisions they make can improve their lives and environment.

D. The civic role the churches defending the Rights of the Child

Promote more churches' participation in defending the Rights of the Child.

In Argentina, there are few churches are actively engaged in defending the Rights of the Child. This is despite the fact that churches have the most comprehensive networks and greater human and social capital than many other institutions. There is a need to intensify education about childrens' rights to protection and participation. It would be good for Foundation EPASI, through its Assemblies of God Argentina denomination or others, to encourage other churches to receive training and become committed to the issue.