The time is now!

stop commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents
Presentation

Objective:

Provide workshop facilitators with sufficient information and the elements required to sensitize participants, making it clear that the commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children is not only violation of their fundamental rights, it is also a crime.

Methodology:

The fifteen sheets that make up this flipchart contain information presented in a specific order that will allow you to explain the phenomenon of commercial sexual exploitation affecting many persons under 18 years of age in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic, as well as on a worldwide scale.

In each section you will find basic information regarding this problem in addition to ideas as to how to act against CSE in different communities or sectors.

The sheets refer to the following topics:

- Commercial sexual exploitation
- What are the different kinds of exploitation and how can they be identified?
- Who are the people exploiting children and adolescents in the sex trade?
- Who are the victims?
- What are the myths or beliefs surrounding commercial sexual exploitation?
- Information on the rights of children
- What can be done to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents?

With regard to the methodology or ways in which this flipchart may be used, it is important to bear in mind the following:

All sessions, workshops or “flipchart presentations” should be as participative as possible. We recommend you begin each section with a question. The first sheet, for example, may begin with the question – “Does anyone know about, or has anyone ever heard of commercial sexual exploitation?” The discussion should focus on the contents on the back of each sheet and those that the facilitator considers appropriate. At the end of each section a closing summary which links the contents of one section to the next, is recommended.
Commercial sexual exploitation is...

- Giving gifts or food to children or adolescents under 18 years of age in exchange for their participation in sexual activities

- The payment may be made directly to the child or adolescent or to their family or other party

Note: Commercial sexual exploitation is a crime punishable by a prison sentence.
**Topic: What is commercial sexual exploitation?**

**Objective:**
To analyze the concept of commercial sexual exploitation using simple terms in order to understand the extent of the problem.

**Methodology:**
This sheet refers to the concept of CSE, and, as in the first sheet, it is suggested that a question be posed at the beginning such as: “Does anybody know anything about commercial sexual exploitation, or has anyone ever heard of it?” Centre the discussion around the importance of knowing what this phenomenon is, making reference to the fact that we are perhaps all familiar with CSE situations but have not considered them as such.

Taking into account the straightforward manner in which the concept is described in this section, and having heard the replies to the question put to the participants, continue the discussion –with the help of those present- as to what kind of things constitute payment in kind (food, studies, jewellery, a house for the family, etc.) or the benefits obtained from those doing the exploiting, or from others. By the end of the discussion this concept should have been made clear.

Below is a description of the following concept, provided as added support for facilitators; they can also refer to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

**Concept:**
Commercial sexual exploitation: occurs when a person pays or promises to pay a person under 18 years of age or a third party (procurer) with money or in kind (this is the commercial aspect of CSE), in order that the child or adolescent engages in some form of sexual activity.

**Reference Material:**
We should bear in mind that commercial sexual exploitation is:

- An ILLEGAL activity that harms children and adolescents
- A modern form of slavery
- A crime committed by those who pay and those who facilitate the activity
- A form of sexual violence
Topic: What is commercial sexual exploitation? (continued)

Objective:
Explain the basic elements that should be taken into account in order to make it clear exactly what commercial sexual exploitation against underage persons implies.

Methodology:
Begin the analysis of this sheet by mentioning the fact that there are many different violations of the rights of children and adolescents, and that commercial sexual exploitation is a form of sexual violence and economic exploitation, as well as a violation of the human rights of children and adolescents. It is considered a modern form of slavery, added to the fact that the victims are sold as merchandise.

When these aspects are being explained, groupwork may be carried out in order to allow participants to analyze and identify these aspects in relation to everyday situations or cases they have observed. At the end of the groupwork, a debate or form of plenary meeting may be carried out to conclude the session.

Concepts:

Commercial sexual exploitation is:
- a violation of the fundamental rights of children and adolescents
- a form of sexual violence
- an activity that generates huge profits
- (the majority of these profits remain in the hands of the criminals)
- harmful to the child and adolescent victims involved
- a modern form slavery
- (because it has all the characteristics associated with slavery, but in the present era)
- a crime

Children and adolescents CANNOT consent to commercial sexual exploitation, and it is the responsibility of the adults, communities and the State to put a stop to this crime.

Reference Material:
ILO/IPEC. Basic Information on the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic. 2005
Types of commercial sexual exploitation

- Sexual activities in exchange for payment in cash or in kind

- Using children or adolescents in public or private sex shows for adults, such as “pole dancing” or “strip shows”

- Production or selling of pornographic videos or photographs showing children or adolescents; or the possession of such materials for personal use
**Topic: Ways in which commercial sexual exploitation manifests itself**

**Objective:**

Provide information on the ways in which commercial sexual exploitation against underage persons manifests itself to allow it to be identified within the community.

**Methodology:**

To begin with, an explanation should be given of the three main types of commercial sexual exploitation against underage persons, namely: paid sexual activities, the use of children and adolescents in sex shows, and pornography using images or voices of underage persons.

This section mentions the three types of sexual exploitation that most people are perhaps familiar with or have heard of but have maybe not identified as CSE. It is recommended that a proposal be put to the group to analyze the illustrations on the sheet and classify them under specific types of commercial sexual exploitation, and begin the analysis of each topic with examples or practical cases that have been previously prepared.

The session may be concluded by explaining that each of the ways in which the three types of CSE analyzed in this section manifest themselves are set out in the following sheets.

**Concept:**

It is important to stress that the term “child prostitution” should be avoided in regard to CSE since it has very strong moral connotations that tend to blame the person engaged in it. On the other hand, in these countries adult prostitution is not a crime, as opposed to CSE, which is, and, as mentioned before, constitutes a crime as well as a violation of the rights of underage persons.

**Reference Material:**

Local exploitation:

- The victims may equally be male or female
- Nationals of all the countries commit this crime
- It is a socially-tolerated activity
**Topic: Local exploitation**

**Objective:**
To acquire a clearer understanding of what is known in our countries as “Local exploitation”

**Methodology:**
The different ways in which commercial sexual exploitation manifests itself -shown in the following sheets- are based on the relationship established between the person doing the exploiting (the “client-exploiter”) and the victim.

It is suggested that the discussion begin by pointing out the definition included under the “Concept” section.

According to studies undertaken in this regard, local exploitation is the most common in Central America and the Dominican Republic. The way people are educated -men are taught to be strong and to give orders, and women are taught to be obedient and to always say yes- contributes to the fact that this problem is hidden and considered “natural” or accepted.

**Concept:**
Local exploitation is sexual exploitation that occurs when the “client-exploiter” and the victim are from the same country, and both live in that country. Although it is perceived as something that “has always gone on”, it is the most common form of exploitation and is socially tolerated.

Many people think that CSE is a problem that is linked only to tourists, when, in reality, all the studies show that the majority of exploiters are the same nationality as their victims and are even from the same community. All forms of CSE are present in local exploitation: sexual activities, child or adolescent pornography and sex shows.

**Reference Material:**
- ILO/IPEC. Basic Information on the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic. 2005
- ILO/IPEC. Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Underage Persons in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic. Regional Summary. 2005
- ILO/IPEC. Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Masculinity. A Qualitative Regional Study with men from the general public. 2004
Sexual exploitation and tourism:

- is the payment made by foreigners for a child or adolescent to undertake any sexual activity
- Our countries are considered poor, and ones in which anything goes. These people take advantage of the fact that these crimes are not reported here.

- Foreigners take advantage of the fact that no-one knows them in these countries.
For the conclusion of the analysis of this sheet, newspaper articles on situations in which commercial sexual exploitation is linked to tourism can be used to start a debate among the participants with a view to promoting a greater understanding of the concept.

**Concept:**

This phenomenon occurs when the exploiter travels from one country or region to another to exploit the community’s children or adolescents using any form of CSE. Their status as “tourists” often affords them anonymity or impunity, despite the fact that –just like any national- they are committing a serious crime.

**Reference Material:**

Trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation purposes

- They are offered good opportunities (jobs, money) in places faraway from their communities, within the country or abroad
- They may be sold several times and taken to different places
- Victims of trafficking are locked up, threatened and forced to carry out sexual activities

Note: Trafficking should not be confused with smuggling, in which people pay a coyote or "middleman" to help them cross the borders of two countries.
Objective:
To analyze the phenomenon of trafficking of children and adolescents for sexual purposes as one of the forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

Methodology:
As in the former section, a brief presentation should be made on how this form of commercial sexual exploitation should be understood. It is important to clearly explain the luring, displacement and taking in of underage victims of trafficking, as suggested below.

In the case of trafficking, the children or adolescents are taken from one region or country to another in order to use them in the sex trade. The severity of the situation of exploitation is still further aggravated since the victims have much less chance or no possibility whatsoever of asking for help as they do not know anyone or they may not even know the language spoken in the place they have been taken to.

In this case, in addition to being subjected to some form of exploitation (paid sexual relations, pornography or sex shows), children and adolescents are also displaced. In order for displacement to occur exploiters also undertake other criminal activities, for example: luring and taking in girls and boys in order to displace them for exploitation purposes. The victims are often also exploited on their way to the destination to which they have been sent.

Concept:
Trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation purposes should be understood as luring, displacing and taking in children and adolescents from one country to another (international) and from one region to another within the same country (national), with or without their consent or that of their families, in order to use them in commercial sexual exploitation.

Reference Material:
- ILO/IPEC. Would that it were fiction. Documentary on trafficking in children and adolescents for CSE purposes. 11 minutes. San José 2004.
Pornography involving children and adolescents is manifested in many different ways:

- Photographs showing nudity or sexual positions
- Viewing or sending images (of nudity, sexual positions) via the Internet
- Possession of pornographic material
- Trading magazines or films showing these types of images
**Topic: Pornography that uses images of children and adolescents**

**Objective:**
Obtain information about pornography that uses images of girls, boys and adolescents.

**Concept:**
Child and adolescent pornography is any representation, using any means, of an underage person involved in sexual activities, be they real or simulated; or any representation of their sexual organs.

Child and adolescent pornography is a manifestation of CSE in which there is no contact between the victim and those who produce, trade or possess it. However, many people may be involved in this crime.

Child and adolescent pornography may be reproduced in magazines, videos, telephone voice messages, films, etc. New information technology and communications, such as digital cameras, have facilitated its production and the Internet, in particular, has helped this type of pornography to become widespread.

For example, a photograph can be distributed to thousands of people anywhere in the world in a matter of seconds and this same photograph could remain on the Internet for many years, continuing to affect the victim.

**Reference Material:**
ILO/IPEC. Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Underage Persons in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic. Regional Summary. 2005

ILO/IPEC. Basic Information on the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic. 2005
Who are the exploiters?

It could be anyone:

- From any trade or profession
- Be married, divorced or single...
- From any country
- The majority are men, but there are also women who exploit
Topic: Who are the exploiters?

Objective:
To find out who sexually exploits children and adolescents.

Methodology:
In order to explain this section, it is important to bear in mind that there are many myths and much prejudice regarding the people who commit this type of crime. What we mean is that many of those participating in the workshop or forum will already have their own preconceived ideas about who these exploiters are.

However, point out that those who commit the crime of commercial sexual exploitation may belong to any profession, be married, single or widowed and may be of any social standing; furthermore, they may be found in any country. Another important aspect that should be highlighted is that they may be heterosexual or homosexual and although the majority are male, some are also female.

They may be persons acting on their own or in a group, which may include relatives.

The networks of intermediaries may be made up of: taxi drivers, travel agencies, tourism operators in general, procurers.

Concepts:

Exploiter: the person who pays a child or adolescent to perform sexual activities. They are also referred to as “client-exploiter”.

Procurer: the person who lures an underage person into carrying out any commercial sexual exploitation activity.

Intermediary: the person who receives some form of payment and facilitates the contact between the “client-exploiter” and any underage person. Among these are taxi drivers, bar owners, bars, hotels, massage parlours, etc.

Reference Material:

ILO/IPEC. Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Underage Persons in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic. Regional Summary. 2005

ILO/IPEC. Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Masculinity. A Qualitative Regional Study with men from the general public. 2004

Who are the victims?

- The majority are female: Most are young girls and adolescents, but many victims are also young boys - male victims.
**Topic: Who are the victims of commercial sexual exploitation?**

**Objective:**

To understand and find out who the victims are and what factors contribute to their vulnerability.

**Methodology:**

The explanation of this section may begin by pointing out that any person under 18 years of age could be entrapped in commercial sexual exploitation due to their vulnerability.

There are many laws that obligate adults to protect all children and adolescents, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that nations should commit to protecting underage persons from all forms of abuse and sexual exploitation, and that they should take all the necessary measures to prevent these crimes.

On the other hand, it is important to make it clear that, although the majority of the victims are female, some victims of CSE are male. Cultural mores sometimes prevent us from recognizing that boys are also vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation.

However, it should be noted that there are certain situations that put children and adolescents at greater risk of sexual exploitation, and some of which, are described below.

**Concepts:**

**Vulnerability:** a person’s situation after all aspects involving the relation between risk and protection have been analyzed. The greater the protection, the lesser the risk, and vice-versa –the lesser the protection, the greater the risk.

**Risk:** The probability that one or more characteristics or factors that could increase the emergence of adverse and negative effects on the person’s development may appear.

**Protection:** The factor that reduces the probability that the person may suffer harm.

**Reference Material:**


Risk factors:

Any child or adolescent could become a victim!

But if they also:

- live in poverty
- have been abandoned
- suffer abuse at home
- have not been protected by the institutions that should protect them
- live on the streets and suffer labour exploitation
- consume alcohol and drugs

they are even more vulnerable

Note: it is the adult who “sells” the child or adolescent or pays for sexual relations who is committing the crime, and NEVER the underage person.
**Topic: Why are underage persons vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation?**

**Objective:**

To reflect on the vulnerability that affects children and adolescents, and on how it makes the appearance of situations of CSE possible.

**Methodology:**

This section shows participants a series of situations with which they have coexisted and which they never thought could put a child or adolescent at risk of CSE and other problems. These factors are taken advantage of by sexual delinquents, and used to lure the underage persons into commercial sexual exploitation.

Begin the discussion by indicating that there are many factors that make a child or adolescent vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Stress the fact that the underage persons are NEVER responsible for their involvement in commercial sexual exploitation, and that the responsibility ALWAYS lies with the person or persons who exploit them.

It is then recommended that an analysis be made of one of the following risk factors.

**Concepts:**

**Females are particularly vulnerable:** women here are educated to serve and always be available (this aspect is aggravrated when myths are analyzed)

**Lack of money:** in our region poverty is one of the main factors creating vulnerability to CSE. This does not mean that all poor children and adolescents are victims of CSE, however, it is possible that poverty linked to other vulnerability factors are present in many situations of commercial sexual exploitation.

**Abandonment or violence within the family:** when underage persons are victims of abuse in the home they look for support in others and there are often people who take advantage of this situation. Likewise, when they live in abandonment and are not supervised by their family they easily fall prey to exploiters.

**Because the institutions that should protect them do not always fulfil their responsibility:** either due to a lack of information or inadequately defined priorities.

**Because they are pregnant very young:** the girls or adolescents who are pregnant are often abandoned by those who got them pregnant and by their own families; this is why, as with intrafamily abuse and abandonment, they easily fall prey to exploiters.

**Because they live or work on the streets:** living or working on the streets is the easiest way to be spotted and lured by delinquents who take advantage of their unprotected condition offering them better alternatives as “bait” for subjecting them to commercial sexual exploitation.

**Because they are addicted to drugs and alcohol:** these types of substances often help victims to escape the violence they are experiencing and, on the other hand, exploiters supply them with free drugs to keep them in CSE.

**Reference Materials:**


Myths or beliefs regarding commercial sexual exploitation

- The commercial sexual exploitation of underage persons is a well-known fact and few cases exist.
- The underage persons who are sexually exploited are involved in that activity because they like it, they feel good about it and it is easy money. There is nothing that can be done to stop it.
- The victims of commercial sexual exploitation are only small girls and boys.
Topic: Myths and realities about commercial sexual exploitation:

Objective:

Explain the myths and stereotypes that exist in relation to commercial sexual exploitation and confront these situations with information that allows them to modify these ideas.

Methodology:

Begin the discussion by commenting that the “myths” are ideas or beliefs that are presented to us as if they were absolute and fixed truths. For example, the following question may be made: “Why do you think that throughout history, in most families, when a girl is born they dress her in pink, and if it is a boy they dress him in blue?” Possible replies to this are: because it is the custom, because that is what our grandparents did, etc. When the replies have been heard, explain that that is also the way myths work: they are repeated over time and become truths that we do not question because it seems that is the way things should be.

In order to analyze these two sheets on myths, consider the information presented in the following sheet. The work should encourage participants to reflect internally and allow them to become aware of the fact that these myths or beliefs that have been considered for years as truths are merely ways of thinking that, by being constantly repeated, have become absolute truths and do not allow us to see clearly the negative consequences that are destroying the lives of thousands of children and adolescents.
Myths or beliefs

- Everyone involved in commercial sexual exploitation earns a lot of money
- Men are in control; they are the powerful machos.
- It is only tourists who commit these crimes.
Topic: Myths and realities regarding commercial sexual exploitation... (continued)

Concepts:

Below are some comments that may be helpful in analyzing myths and beliefs that exist regarding commercial sexual exploitation.

The girls and adolescents are sexually exploited because those who abuse them take advantage of their innocence and their lack of experience. They are not the ones who make the decision to be sexually abused; it is not a job and much less an easy situation.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the legal and moral responsibility for exploitation always lies with the person who exploits, and who has more power over the child or adolescent.

It is true that commercial sexual exploitation generates large profits which remain in the hands of the adults (procurers or intermediaries) or those who make up the mafia networks. The children and adolescents continue to be the victims and recieve very little money.

Commercial sexual exploitation can cause very serious life consequences, which hinder the development of persons who are victims. They are not involved “because they like it”; they cannot consent to being exploited. We should offer them real opportunities for getting out of their situation.

An underage person who has been subjected to sexual exploitation, mistreated, deceived, degraded and manipulated does not know any other way of expressing their feelings to others and this is the only real thing they have, which is why their behaviour is often misinterpreted.

Institutions and families often do not provide the support and safety that child and adolescent victims need in order to be considered important and valuable persons; on the contrary, they are blamed, and often have not had the opportunity to study. Very few people consider them victims of adults who use them for their own benefit.

In our society men are taught they have power over women. They are taught they have privileges and authority to have control over everything and everyone. This is why it seems natural for men to be in charge and superior to women when, in reality, men and women have the same rights.

Reference Material:


Rights of underage persons

Do the children and adolescents have rights?

**YES**... And what does that mean?

- They are persons
- We should listen to them
- We should protect them
- Parents should use authority but treat them with respect
- As parents we should build their trust and confidence in us so that they will tell us what they are experiencing

- The community is responsible for providing care and protection for all its children.
**Topic: Human rights of children and adolescents**

**Objective:**
To reflect on the human rights of children and adolescents that obligate adults, communities and the State to protect them.

**Methodology:**
Begin by pointing out that 1989 was the year the “Convention on the Rights of the Child” was approved and this moment marked a “before and after” in all countries with regard to the human rights of children and adolescents.

Present an explanation of this sheet based on the column of concepts set out below.

**Concepts:**
Before 1989 children were treated as objects - an object that had to be protected and was, therefore, a property of the parents; it could even be said that, on the basis on this protection, many injustices occurred, to the extent that institutions that were virtual prisons were set up in order to send children there to be “corrected”.

These institutions “protected” children who were disobedient to their parents, who stole food because they were hungry, were orphans, had committed some type of crime, etc., in short, those who did not behave as society expects them to or those who had committed a crime, they were cared for the same way.

On the other hand, in many cases their parents at home or their teachers treated them as if they were not persons, and they were at the mercy of what their “elders” decided.

After 1989 children were legally recognized as persons, not objects of protection. Thereafter, a new era began for children and adolescents since all nations began to review their laws in order that children and adolescents be considered and treated as such.

This means that all their rights should be respected and taken into account in all matters concerning them. It also means that, on being treated and considered as persons, they should be protected, not as objects but, rather, as people, implying they have the same rights as adults.

Taking into account all of the above, we stress that, in order to comply with the human rights of “children and adolescents as subjects of rights”, nations and adults in general must take responsibility for respecting their rights and ensure they are not violated, as is the case with commercial sexual exploitation, which, as mentioned at the outset, is a VIOLATION OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

**Reference Material:**
ILO/IPEC, Rahab Foundation. File entitled “Know and defend your rights 1” 2004
http://www.oit.org.pe/ipec/documentos/derechos_ninos_esci_r.pdf

ILO/IPEC, Rahab Foundation. File entitled “Know and defend your rights 2” 2004
What should we do?

- Be informed about this crime and on what I can do, as a parent or member of the community.
- Establish and participate in communal networks for protecting all children and adolescents.
- Report any suspicion of commercial sexual exploitation against a child or adolescent in my family or neighbourhood to the police or the State Prosecutor.
- Inform the protection authorities of situations that affect the rights of children and adolescents in my community.
**Topic: How can we confront commercial sexual exploitation?**

**Objective:**
To be informed as to what we should and can do to protect children and adolescents from commercial sexual exploitation.

**Methodology**
This is the last topic in the flipchart, which is why it is important to conclude by pointing out that the fundamental idea behind discussing the issue of commercial sexual exploitation is that it should be taken into account that, although this is a crime that violates the rights of children and adolescents in the cruelest manner, if we commit to safeguarding the fulfilment of children’s rights, we need to be informed and do so in the most responsible manner possible.

It is important that the facilitator be informed beforehand of the mechanisms that exist in the country for reporting these types of crime such as, for example, the institutions responsible, telephone numbers, etc., pointing out that they may be reported anonymously and verbally.

The presentation may conclude by stating that, although there are many people who can help us confront commercial sexual exploitation by keeping us informed and trained, we need to DECIDE – OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS AND ALL THE CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN THE WORLD ARE WAITING FOR US TO ACT IN THEIR DEFENSE.

**Reference Material:**