The Demand Side of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Adolescents: Qualitative Study in South America (Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru)

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Summary of Results of the Investigation

“Weaving Networks against the Exploitation of Boys, Girls and Adolescents” is an IPEC regional project financed by the Department of Labour of the United States. Its development objective is to contribute to the prevention and elimination of Child Domestic Labour in other people’s homes (CDL) and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Boys, Girls and Adolescents (CSEC) in South America through interventions in Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru. The project began in late 2004 until December 2007 and it aims to achieve the following products in its execution: comparable and quality information with respect to the characteristics and magnitude of CDL and CSEC in selected countries, made available and used by key actors; a legal, institutional and cultural framework favourable to the initiation of effective action against CDL and CSEC in Colombia, Chile, Paraguay and Peru; and effective pilot models developed for the prevention and withdrawal of boys, girls and adolescents from CDL and CSEC.

In order to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the demand side of commercial sexual exploitation of boys, girls and adolescents, IPEC carried out a study in 2004 on commercial sexual exploitation and masculinity in Central America: Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Masculinity. A qualitative regional study on men from the general population. (ILO, San Jose de Costa Rica). Throughout 2005 and 2006, as a part of the “Weaving Networks” Project, IPEC carried out another qualitative regional study on the demand for CSEC in South America with the objectives: a) to understand the characteristics and modus operandi of CSEC demand in Colombia, Chile, Paraguay and Peru; and b) to identify economic, social, cultural and psychological factors that determine the attitudes and behaviour of the people involved in CSEC, as consumers and/or intermediaries.
Research teams worked simultaneously in the 4 countries, directed by a common methodological design that was formulated by the Colombian team linked to Puntos Cardinales (Cardinal Points).

The investigation set out to understand the characteristics of demand in CSEC and its modus operandi, through an exploration of the actors involved in it.

It looked to focus on the interpretation and understanding of the reasons for and manners of consumption of CSEC, those that are understood to be nurtured in broader social contexts. Thus an understanding of consumption is drawn from the discourse and the practices of the implicated actors, involved in the processes of socialization and power relations through relational models, identity stereotypes, imagination and social symbolism that influence the subjective configuration of the key actor of the study: the consumer of CSE.

The questions raised by the IPEC - Weaving Networks Project that guided the work were as follows:

- What conception of CSEC do those that pay (“clients”) and facilitate (“intermediaries”) the sexual activities with minors have and what do they understand as a boy, girl and adolescent?

- Which economic, cultural and psychological factors determine the attitudes and behaviours of those who become involved in CSEC as “clients” and/or intermediaries?

- How does the relationship between “clients”, “intermediaries” and boys, girls and adolescents work?

- Which elements of the habitual behaviour of the “clients” and “intermediaries”, such as their fears of sanction and repression, would inhibit their conduct?

- Which strategies would be most effective in preventing the recruitment of boys, girls and adolescents to CSEC and in protecting its current victims?
The research only addressed the modality of CSEC consistent with the use of underage people in sexual activities (in streets or closed premises such as brothels, disco clubs, bars, night clubs, etc.); and paid in money or in kind directly to the underage child or to a third person.

As an operational definition of CSEC, the study uses: the sexual abuse by an adult with respect to an adolescent - female or male – under 18 years old; accompanied by a payment in money or in kind to the adolescent (male or female) or to one or more third parties.

The components of CSEC that were considered were:

**Abuse**: taking unfair advantage of a position of social asymmetry.

**Consumer in CSEC**: a person above 18 years old who uses adolescents under 18 years old for sexual purposes and pays for it.

**Adolescent in CSEC**: a person above 14 years old and below 18 years old, used for sexual purposes, paid by a consumer in CSEC.

**Money**: Representation of the value of exchange that is used to pay for the sexual use of adolescents under 18 years old.

The methodology of the study followed a qualitative approach and combined different techniques for the production of information: case-studies, in-depth interviews, itinerant interviews, participant observation and ethnographic description, in addition to an extensive literature review. The first phase of the research was dedicated to the production of a state of the art specific to the demand in CSEC, at the international level and in the four countries, through the compilation of background studies from 1990 onwards. 29 published texts were compiled that contained at least a chapter dedicated to the analysis of the characteristics of demand and the mode of exploitation in CSEC. The examination of these investigations gave a foundation to the research and the perspectives for analysis; it provided guidelines for the fieldwork and oriented the subsequent analysis of the data.

The investigation was based on case studies understood as territorial units where CSEC is practised. That is to say in zones where a dynamic of
A regular demand for paid sex with adolescents exists, a practice that involves different actors with defined roles and functions in a setting/scenario in which this social dynamic spreads.

The methodological design of the investigation determined that in each one of the four countries, two cities with relevant demographic, economic and political conditions were chosen and within each city, two settings which had a background of CSEC of adolescents were investigated.

Therefore, the study included a total of eight South American cities and sixteen settings/scenarios in which, like in other parts of the world, the CSEC of adolescents is practiced. The investigation covered the cities of Santiago and Valparaiso, in Chile; Bogota and Medellín, in Colombia; Asuncion and Ciudad del Este, in Paraguay; and Lima and Cusco, in Peru. Thus the field work, using the ethnographic observation, was carried out in sixteen settings where the phenomenon took place. Therefore a total of 16 case studies were analyzed to fundamentally describe and/or explain the cultural behaviour of the studied population.

The selection of the settings was based on background information on the incidence of CSEC in each country, which was provided by previous investigations in exploratory observations and in tip-offs from key regional informants (authorities, neighbours, consumers, adolescents). Criteria was used that allowed the identification of scenarios characteristic of the CSEC of female adolescents and the CSEC of male adolescents. Also considered were the accessibility of the settings for the research to be carried out as well as the conditions of personal security for the researchers.
The 16 scenarios analysed were distributed in the following way:

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<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>CITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Santiago</td>
<td>• Central Square (Plaza de Armas)</td>
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<td>• El Bosque, Village of El Almendro</td>
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<td>Valparaiso</td>
<td>• Victoria Square</td>
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<td>• Video-arcades and adjoining premises</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Bogotá (Capital)</td>
<td>• Shopping Centre – Carrera Séptima</td>
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<td>• La Alameda Neighbourhood</td>
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<td>Medellín</td>
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<td>• Bolivar Park (Parque Bolívar)</td>
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<td>Paraguay</td>
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<td>(Capital)</td>
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<td>• Shopping Zone</td>
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<td>Perú</td>
<td>Lima (Capital)</td>
<td>• Histórico Centre. Area 1 cinemas and discos</td>
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<td>• Historic Centre. Area 2: Night Clubs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cusco</td>
<td>• Commercial Premises, Wanchac District</td>
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<td>• Night Clubs, Santiago District</td>
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In each one of these settings, the actors interviewed in depth were:

- An **adult** who looks for and pays for sexual activities with adolescents, also referred to as “consumer of CSEC”.

- An **intermediary or facilitator** of the demand and consumption of CSEC.

- A person (**adolescent**) between 14 and 17 years of age **in CSEC**, of feminine or masculine gender and/or transgender.

- An **adult in prostitution** that was in a situation of CSE during his/her adolescence.

- A person with **authority** (competences and capacities to intervene), practical experience or specialized knowledge of the situations of CSEC.
In total 81 in-depth interviews were carried out with actors in the selected settings: 15 consumers of CSEC (males); 17 adolescents in CSEC (females, males and transgender people); 16 intermediaries (males and females); 17 adults working in prostitution that were in a situation of CSEC during their adolescence. (males, females and transgender people); 16 authority figures (males and females).

The information obtained from the interviews was analyzed from four perspectives, each one of which explored the topic of demand for CSEC from different disciplines and dimensions. The central objective of each perspective is exposed in brief below:

**Cultural perspective:** exploring the communicative processes and the significant structures that convey and give symbolic support to CSEC. For this analysis three types or levels of relevant discourse have been set out:

a. **The institutional discourse** that emanates from positions of authority or from the institutional structure and that is fundamental in establishing values of truth or validity in certain ideas, explanations and feelings that are socially dominant about CSEC. The ideas registered by the figures with the authority to intervene in CSEC have been principally included here- according to the institutions of each country, to the professionals who work on CSEC and also to the accounts of the other interviewees of how the subject of CSEC is treated by some of the institutions.

b. **The social discourse**, in which the immediate interpersonal relationships of those actors near to or directly involved in the practice of CSEC engage. The intermediaries, the adolescents ( females and males), the adults working in prostitution and the references to the group of pairs and friends are all considered.

c. **The discourse of the consumers**, which is constituted in relation to the other factors and that establishes particular strains in the modes of understanding the different aspects of the practice of CSEC.

**Power Perspective:** The interpretations and strategies developed by the different actors are supported in broader symbolic structures. In these structures, there are multiple cases of domination or asymmetric power
relations, which condition and outline the potential scope of action and understanding of the network of subjective positions needed to sustain them.

This perspective tried to understand the way in which certain power relations produce consumers of CSEC and the way in which that/those subjectivity(ies) sustain(s) those types of relationships.

An understanding is sought of the way in which ideas, habits, attitudes, motivations and behavioural dispositions, often contradictory, constituted from subjective antagonistic positions and with reference to different discursive fields, strategically come together in the structure of demand for sexual commerce with boys, girls and adolescents.

**Normative Perspective:** exploring the definitions regarding existence, life, love and the conscience of the damage that occurs in commercial sexual exploitation. This perspective aims to understand the substantive directions under which the consumer’s actions are carried out and thus to identify the presence and operation of elements that form the conscience and the abusive desire in certain adults to engage in CSEC practices.

An analysis was attempted of the legal and moral context surrounding the actions of the consumers; in this vein a review of the ideas presented by different actors involved in CSEC was carried out, with respect to their vision of the normative system and its purpose.

**Descriptive Psychological Perspective:** exploring some elements of the relational configuration and linking the internal world of the consumers. In this perspective, some elements are exposed that refer to the psychology of the consumers in the CSEC, such as the types of bonds that they establish in CSEC and in other vital aspects, the gender identity, the choice of sexual object, the characteristics of desire that are put into play and its relation to money.

In the development of the study, the concepts were diversifying and in some cases specifying, depending on different causes. Initially the demand for CSEC is referred to, then later the consumption and the consumers of CSEC, and in the end, with relative comfort, the notions of exploitation, the exploiters and victims. For that reason, different
denominations appear in the text for the same elements of CSEC, depending on the greater relevance according to the perspective of analysis or the designations of the participants (interviewees). This journey only shows that the complexity of the subject makes it difficult to always refer to it with the same words, because some are more favourable than others for addressing specific aspects of the problem. For example, “demand” is a phenomenon of the market logic that without a doubt prevails in CSEC and regulates the market. The notion of “consumption” corresponds with the notion of “demand”, but in addition, it describes a certain attitude or pretension in carrying out the sexual activities with adolescents; and the concept of “exploitation” introduces more clearly the idea of “abuse”, and opens the door to the idea of a “victim.” Thus, the terminological diversity is just a reflection of the diversity of elements of CSEC and of the different perspectives used for its analysis.

The main results of the study indicate that beyond the possible characteristics to recognize in each one of the scenarios there are recurrences that exist amongst them.

The range of exploiters in CSEC, both feminine and masculine, is broad. They are of different ages. Within the study group, the ages varied from 22 to 54 years old. Although there seemed to be more of certain ages in certain contexts: in some scenarios the majority of the population tended to be over 55 years old, while in others they were younger. Nevertheless the most common ages oscillate between 30 or 35 and 55 or 60 years old. The socio-economic conditions also fluctuate, but in some of the study scenarios, that are located in areas of diverse social classes, the consumers of middle and low social stratum were more visible. In others, there were constant references to the existence of very wealthy exploiters by the other actors. The levels of education were varied, which leads to the observation that their occupations were also diverse. Between the ethnic origins there was no predominance registered of one group over the others but rather the opposite: references to several of them in the same scenario.

Nevertheless, not just any man is a sexual exploiter of adolescents, not even potentially. The exploiter is he(she) who chooses to be, inside him(her)self, and thus (s)he distinguishes him(her)self from the others.
Perhaps more so than by socio-demographic, economic or cultural characteristics, they are differentiated by their internal, emotional and mental conditions, socialization processes and life stories.

**How does demand work?**

a) The adults, who have just started to look for underage boys, girls and adolescents, go to places where they know they can find them, thanks to information that they obtain through people they know, reports in the press or simply through the well-known notoriety of the places that are associated with these practices.

b) In the scenario where adolescents in CSEC work on the street, they can be accessed by foot or by car.

c) In private premises - cinemas, bars, discos, night clubs, video arcade premises, etc. - the adults attend because they know beforehand that they can access paid sexual exchanges with adolescents, although the business is dedicated to other activities.

d) Implicit codes exist that mark the initial contact: such as standing up or being in recognized places, wearing characteristic clothes: tight clothes (female adolescent); striking outfits (transvestites); tight clothes that accentuate or reduce masculine characteristics (adolescent males who have sex with other males) and the use of signals (gestures) or glances directed towards the potential “clients”.

e) Starting from a casual conversation, the client will arrive at a deal about price, type of practice and place.

f) In closed premises the approach can be direct or indirect if there many people around; those who look for paid sexual exchanges invite the adolescent to drink something or to dance until a negotiation opens and a subsequent deal.

g) On other occasions, third parties will intervene as facilitators of the deal or as intermediaries who establish contact and avoid the public exhibition of the consumer. These can operate independently or be part of a (more or less) complex and organized network.
h) Also operating as intermediaries are other adolescents and adults who were linked to CSEC as minors and that, now older, search for and link up other underage boys and girls into the practice.

i) The consumers turn to intermediaries when they are already well experienced in the practice of exploitation.

j) In CSEC that is developed in closed premises there are figures who control the activity of the adolescents, regulating or making contacts and receiving and administering the money. They give part of the money to the adolescent (male or female) and reserve the rest as income. The security guards of these premises receive a payment from their employers, which dilutes the notion that they are contributing to the exploitation.

From the four perspectives of analysis the results indicate:

A) **Symbolic structures and discourse on CSEC**

**The institutional Discourse:**

- Silence with regards to CSEC and demand, especially in the school. When the school touches on sexuality it does so from a hygiene perspective aimed at the prevention of sexually transmitted infections. In the case of the study population, the memories from school played an important role in their socialization, establishing norms of male domination over females, and favouring the men’s freedom at the expense of the women’s submission.

- This lack of discussion is greater when it treats masculine adolescents or transvestites in CSEC. The subject is approached with high levels of prejudice.

- The institutional discourse, that supports the rights of the child and the international conventions and adjustments introduced in the laws of the country, is set against another discourse that crystallizes in acts or omissions all that contradicts the respect and protection of female or male adolescents.
Tolerance and transgressions are characteristics repeated in the institutional discourse of the police that should operate as an agent who reinforces the discourse of the State.

The Social Discourse:

- This discourse shows continuity with the institutional discourse in attributing the responsibility to the market, the nature and the previous experiences or traumas of the consumer.
- People coexist with CSEC, they circulate in the settings but “they do not perceive it”; the condemnation is light and if it is registered it tends to hold the adolescents responsible.
- The social discourse is constructed inside and outside of the family, a discourse of “normality” about the demand for CSEC: it responds “to the natural” impulse of men, to his sexual necessity or otherwise it is considered as just another “job”.
- If a person knows about the CSEC of a family member, he or she is likely to cover it up, more so if it relates to homosexual practices.
- In the circle of friends or partners there is a greater freedom to talk about the subject and of personal experiences.

The Discourse of the consumers:

- Consumers show feelings of guilt or rejection of the notion of CSEC that, in general, are overcome through diverse efforts of legitimization of the crime (attributing it to “nature”, identifying it as a normal commercial transaction).
- They do not feel in control of their own bodies (“they feel like their bodies are not their own during the experience”) and are powerless in obeying their aggressive sexual instinct that demand immediate satisfaction.
- Some of them do not perceive the illegality of the practice.
They state that the illegality of the practice acts as a strong incentive for them.

They experience CSEC as a non abusive activity because the adolescent (male or female) participates in a voluntary manner, attributing to their capacity for judgment and a double power: the power of the beauty and age of their bodies, and the power to exert defensive actions or aggressions (robbery, blows).

B) Power Relationships in CSEC

Sexuality is something that is observed as a natural force that is imposed on a person from outside themselves.

The sexual differences and the configuration of desire are attributed to natural or divine causes, which are not opposed but reinforced.

The individual that sexually desires boys, girls and adolescents appears to be a pathological deformation of this natural configuration.

The desire itself is vivid as if they are watching it in somebody else, like a force that is imposed on them and against which they fight or for which they feel they give in, feeling that they have no choice but to obtain satisfaction and stay “well”.

The desire for control is a central characteristic in the consumer, which manifests itself in multiple and contradictory ways. What they desire is not simply to have control, but that control exists, including the control that operates over the consumers themselves.

The stated sexual practices indicate different ways of attributing rigid patterns derived or identified with patriarchal domination, where the main means of enjoyment are in representations of this domination in a range of formats.

What is bought is a performance, a staging in which the domination situation can be simulated by mutual agreement.

In the four countries, “clients” of male adolescents are reported who prefer to be penetrated or to develop performances in which they play
the role of `victims', under diverse role-plays and different intensities of submission.

**Power: gender and generation**

- The relationships between the actors of CSEC perpetuate social codes that maintain the notion of gender domination.

- The representations of the gender differences (social roles attributed to men and women) are reinforced when they are identified as inherent characteristics, determined from a biological order.

- Masculinity is associated with control and domination whilst femininity is associated with submission and dependency, identifying it closely with the childhood. The woman is not counted as a human being with rights, but as a territory or object for use.

- The consumers of feminine CSEC have a greater social acceptance than their partners who engage in masculine CSEC, due principally to the heterosexuality of their relationship. For the perpetrators of masculine CSEC there is a designation and recrimination for the homosexuality, but not for the vulnerability of the rights of underage people. Men who sexually exploit female adolescents can, for example, sit on a bench to chat and joke with them and maintain a more public and diverse relationship, whilst the homosexuals hide their presence and relate with their victims in closed and intimate places, with some exceptions. It is partly this way because the exploiters are more fearful of sanction over their choice of partner, than what can emerge (internally or socially) from the damage that they do to the adolescent.

- Masculine sexuality is the only one with autonomy, which leads to the legitimization of the constant search for new (and more) sexual experiences on the part of men.

- The representation that younger people “offer” more sexual satisfaction than “older” people predominates, given certain physical capacities and mental or spiritual characteristics that get lost with age and could be recovered through sexual contact with underage people.
- Certain conditions and capacities of the adolescent body are desirable characteristics: to be “affectionate,” “closed” (virgins or with the least possible sexual experience), bodies with little use.

- The inexperience associated with the condition of an underage person is desired and seen as an opportunity to exert power over her/him.

- The sexual activity between adults and underage people is identified as a pedagogical relationship in which they would transmit knowledge to a sexuality that is just beginning.

**Economic Power**

- For the adolescents, the consumers are a source of income in cash; also through gifts, lodging, drugs, alcohol and fun, with different levels of regularity and certainty, right up to exclusive and constant availability.

- Other actors who exert economic domination over the adolescents receive earnings through a concept of intermediation, protection, covering needs or lodging; this type of economic domination is indicative of, in some cases, situations similar to captivity or semi-slavery.

- CSEC is recognized as a normal economic transaction, to which the adolescents resort as a survival strategy, understanding their availability for CSEC as a natural consequence of poverty. Thus, it removes the responsibility from the demand.

- The payment is valued as a mechanism of legitimization of the demand and the CSEC, and the notion of abuse is restricted to non-payment and unjust treatment.

- The consumers consider themselves benefactors of the adolescents (female/male) because they pay them. The payment that they make in exchange for sexual activities with adolescents exempts them from responsibility. They do not feel like exploiters because they buy a service with a price defined by the victim.
c) **Normative perspective**

- An undervaluation of the legal norms exists in the 4 studied countries along with the idea that there is no intrinsic value associated with the activity.

- It is considered that everything that is prohibited is so because it is bad (morally and socially) or generates some damage to a specific category of people.

- This is played down because it is thought that the legal norms that prohibit certain behaviours are actually what stimulates them.

- The authorities are the actors who showed a more informed knowledge of the law related to CSEC in general. The discourse of the rest of the actors contains very primary and imprecise notions of CSEC.

- The general assessment of CSEC as a practice that is not “good” nor morally acceptable is constantly strained by constant affirmations such as: “the adolescents need to earn a living”; “it is a voluntary practice” and “the need for men to satiate their sexual desires is unrestrainable”. Consequently, CSEC is inevitable.

**As for the knowledge and assessment of the regulations on the part of the consumers, it is observed that:**

- They play down the role of the regulations because they do not believe that the prohibition can be uniform and include all people.

- The think that the people search out the prohibited activities because it would give them new experiences and imagine a human being to be in a constant and natural search for new pleasures.

- Their knowledge of the specific legal rules is very scattered and, in their opinion, the concept of childhood and the population that the regulations aim to protect, would not apply to the individuals with whom they are involved.
The main justifications for not respecting the legal regulations are:

- The poverty and shortages that the adolescents in CSEC live through; the fact that they are in such a situation means that the consumer’s actions give them a sense of benevolence, they are benefiting the less fortunate.

- What the adolescents do, although it is for money, they do because they want to, they are not forced into anything.

- The consumption of alcoholic spirits or drugs, that would relax the consumer’s behaviour and make them more prone to engage in abnormal behaviour.

D) Descriptive Psychological Perspective:

- The consumers of CSEC establish a type of bond characterized by being: asymmetric, degraded and divided.

- Their nuclear gender identity has been constructed based on the typical traditional masculine model of gender domination, although the generic and sexual identities vary and include homosexual practices.

- Objects of desire of the consumers are: the conquest of virginity, the adolescent bodies with physical characteristics such as thinness; eyes; muscle tone; tone of the skin; small chests, to which are associated idealized attributes such as: shame, inexperience, manageability and satisfaction. In some cases specifically masculine characteristics are desired.

- The consumers experience their desire as something urgent, of high intensity, which is followed by an unstoppable overflowing need for gratification. Their search for pleasure does not consider the sexual (female/male) partner.

- The resource to money and payment arises as a faster and “safer” option.
They associate the money with transitory relationships.

To pay avoids the need to express themselves and/or to engage in social mechanisms.

The constant resource to payment would presume a certain psychic economy and smaller effort.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**As obstructing factors to CSEC and its demand, the following needs are recognized:**

- Public sensitization, awareness raising and social control.
- Diffusion of the effective legislation and of the reasons why they exist.
- Constant supervision, control and intervention in known circuits of CSEC, which protects the underage people and sanctions the intermediaries, facilitators and consumers.
- More sensitization and training for the government employees whose work links to CSEC, mainly the justice operators.
- Systematic and constant investment in the reduction of the vulnerability factors that link boys and girls and mainly adolescent into CSEC.

The character of legitimacy that the payment attributes to the action of the consumers. In CSEC, the relationship is built upon the sexual desire of an adult and the economic necessity of an underage person, therefore the key to this kind of exploitation is the capacity of an agent to give money and the necessity of another one to receive it. It is recommended:

- To install special programmes targeted at reducing the conditions of social and economic vulnerability of families with sons and daughters who are in situations of risk of inclusion in CSEC;
To implant special programmes targeted at underage people from 12 years old upwards, found in situations of socio-economic and personal risk, with the objective of strengthening their capacity for self-protection; training them for the world of work; and identifying with a view to developing their skills and abilities for a future working life;

To implement programmes targeted at the generation of employment opportunities for the population from 14 years old upwards, such as: vocational training; training for employment capacity in the more dynamic sectors of the local economy; creation of programmes of first jobs targeted at adolescents and young adults from sectors of greater economic vulnerability;

To invest in local economic development in order to generate opportunities for decent work for the population that is above the minimum age for admission to the employment.

Distortion of the childhood concept. In this study it was observed that distortions exist with respect to this concept that associate childhood with the years up until the beginning of puberty. Thus, in the mind of the community, when the adolescents pass 13, 14 or 15 years old they are nearer the adult condition. This represents a gap with respect to what is established in the legislation to protect childhood and adolescence. It conveys that not only the consumers but the other actors, including adolescents, play down the participation of those older than 13, 14, or 15 years old in CSEC situations.

The right to integral protection, which the underage people enjoy, cannot be inalienable, but this is fact is invisible to the eye, as much for those who resort to CSEC as for those who facilitate it and even those who are victims of the practice. In response to this it is recommended:

To include the term adolescent or adolescence in the mass communication campaigns against CSEC that are carried out.

To incorporate the concepts of adolescents in the didactic materials targeted at the training and sensitization of different actors and
sectors (teachers, journalists, policemen/women, judges, public prosecutors (attorney general), tourism operators, etc).

- To promote in the mass media the debate on the implications of using female adolescent and women’s bodies as images to encourage consumption.

**Invisibility of CSEC in the educational system. CSEC is a subject practically absent in the school curriculum. This gap produces a lot of ignorance and indifference regarding the phenomenon, which reduces the possibility of people developing a critical understanding of it. It is recommended:**

- To promote, with urgency, the introduction of a sexual education programme in the educational curriculum at basic and secondary levels that addresses, amongst its contents, the problem of CSEC and specifically its demand.

- To produce and diffuse newsletters for students, which cover the following:

  ✓ Clear explanations on the meaning of CSEC, what a situation of CSEC constitutes and the necessary distinction between intrafamiliar sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation;

  ✓ The ways in which boys, girls and adolescents can say no and be protected from these forms of exploitation;

  ✓ The existing legal regulations on the matter;

  ✓ Information about the organizations which inform adolescents where they can ask for help if they require it;

- With a view to achieving a more lasting effect with the sensitization activities, the information about CSEC must be included in the curriculum of training programmes for teachers, lawyers, psychologists and other professions related to the subject and that work directly and indirectly with boys, girls and adolescents.
To implement training workshops on monitoring for the prevention of CSEC, for teachers and parents, which allow reflection on the problem, and knowledge of how to confront it.

**Although it is not possible to generalize, many testimonies of adolescents, consumers and intermediaries indicate that police officers protect places where CSEC is practiced or in some cases pressure the adolescents in CSEC to give them money or even carry out sexual practices. As opposed to the persistence of these situations it recommends:**

- To create channels for the denouncement of abuses committed by policemen/women in reliable and accessible institutions that are able to present and to follow up the accusations.

- To promote legal sanctions for those policemen/women that mistreat or take advantage of their positions of power to sanction, insult, or abuse the adolescents.

**According to the research, the awareness raising campaigns on CSEC can operate as an obstacle to the demand, in as much as they oblige actors involved to rethink their practices due to the increased notoriety attached to it. It is recommended:**

- To increase and to analyse the awareness raising campaigns relating to the different modalities and effects of CSEC through the local and national media (TV, radio, press, public and institutional WebPages and other printed materials).

- To develop codes of conduct for staff members and employees of public sector organizations and private companies as a mechanism of prevention and sanction for commercial sexual exploitation of underage people;

- To organize sensitization activities and advanced training courses on the need to eliminate CSEC at the national and local level, directed at specific groups that have an influence in their own territory and that
can replicate the activities: employees, trade unions, religious leaders, teachers, communicators, community leaders, among others.

- To carry out diffusion and sensitization campaigns on the links between the consumption of CSEC and the risk of acquiring HIV.

- To promote socio-educational programmes through specialized institutions and NGOs for men in general, who understand why it is a problem to be a consumer in the CSEC.

- To carry out socio-educational programmes with the consumers and intermediaries who are arrested and serving sentences for crimes related to CSEC.

- To promote awareness raising campaigns aimed at highlighting the reality that the CSEC of boys, girls and adolescents is a daily social practice, so that the concept of a consumer is not hidden under the guise of an imaginary pathological monster, but made real.

The law is complied with even though it is from fear of its consequences. This is a factor that, if strengthened, could obstruct the practise of CSEC. A possible aspect to reinforce, according to the findings of this study, is the diffusion of the facts about the current legislation and the reasons why it exists. Also, it is stated that in many countries the legislation only considers the practise of CSEC a crime when it is perpetrated against people under the age of 14 years old. This generates a gap in the legislation preventing the sanction of consumers and facilitators of CSEC with adolescents, who represent most of the underage people in CSEC. For this it is recommended:

- In the countries where the crime of commercial sexual exploitation of underage people only refers to those minors under the age of 14 years old, it is fundamental to adapt the legislation so that the practice of CSEC with the population between 14 to 18 years old, is subject to equal punishment.

- To not apply fines or any substitute measures of freedom (such as
community service) in the verified cases of CSEC on the part of facilitators/intermediaries and consumers. The certainty of application of the law with a jail sentence, as gentle as it is, represents a strong inhibitor of demand.

- To massively diffuse and make clear, within the framework of a campaign against CSEC, the contents of the laws that establish penalties for punishable acts against underage people.

The permanent supervision, control and intervention in known circuits of CSEC have contributed to the identification of places where it is practised and, gradually, have served to spread the word that CSEC is a practice that causes damage and has sanctions. In order to harness this, it is recommended:

- To install mechanisms, such as a database for registering information about the identity of exploiters (consumers of CSEC, intermediaries, facilitators), which can be shared between the police and justice sectors at national and international level. These databases can serve different purposes such as for example, the prohibition of the exploiters entering certain professions that put them in frequent contact with and close to young people;

- To confiscate the goods of individuals, networks and groups that are proven to enrich themselves through CSEC, transforming them into funds for financial compensation to be returned in the shape of programmes of protection and intervention for the victims;

- To sensitize the judicial authorities and public prosecution service so that they give priority to the cases of commercial sexual exploitation of boys, girls and adolescents, applying the expected penalties in an effective and efficient way in each country;

- To offer technical support to public prosecutors and members of the public forces with the hope of strengthening their capacities to identify cases of commercial sexual exploitation, to protect the victims, to present the corresponding reports and to take the consumers and intermediaries to court;
To develop training programmes for the justice and services agents on the suitable application of the law and treatment towards the victim, with the purpose of guiding the sanction for CSEC consumers and protecting the boy, girl or adolescent.

To implement and promote a CSEC denouncement phone-line; which must involve a system for the supervision, control and monitoring of the operatives and the actions taken on the premises after their intervention.

The studies carried out on CSEC, although they are not many, have made it possible for the subject to circulate and begin to become a more well-known phenomenon, including the truth about its harmful consequences. For this it is recommended:

The Universities must assume an active role in problems of this nature, creating lines of permanent research that assure longitudinal studies about the different modalities of CSEC and produce diagnoses with respect to the effectiveness and impact of the interventions.

As general recommendations the following needs were identified:

Long term planning and the allocation of financial resources that assure effective institutional responses from the sectors of intervention and protection of childhood, adolescence and families. The sectors include education; labour; legislation; legal and penal. Also necessary is the appropriate capacity of institutional responses at local level;

Investment in the constant and specialized training of human resources for the educational institutions; institutions of protection and intervention for childhood, adolescence and families; institutions of monitoring and control and mainly, the operators of the justice system;

Execution of long term programmes with resources assigned in the national budget because the magnitude of this problem cannot be tackled through targeted, time-bound projects implemented with funds from international cooperation;
To establish a coordinated and inter-sectoral action between public and private organizations;

To implement programmes of horizontal and bilateral cooperation between the countries of the region, due to the international nature of CSEC and to manage to harness the financial and human resources in South America and other regions;

To coordinate actions with civil society organizations to respond to a problem that not only requires structural changes - to modify the factors of social and economic vulnerability that fuels the supply of boys, girls and adolescents - but also deep changes in the culture that generates and reproduces the demand in CSEC.

NOTE:
The execution of the study involved a significant number of investigators. In Chile, a team from the Arcis University - Ines Reca Moreyra (coordinator), Pabla Avila Fernandez and Javier Quintanilla Nieva, and their assistants, Doris Ojeda Cisternas and Macarena Bartolome. In Colombia, the team was formed by: Roberto Moncada Roa (coordinator), Maritza Diaz Baron, Pedro Andrés González Malaver and Fernando Pieschacón Aponte. In Paraguay, the research was the responsibility of the Studies and documentation Centre (CDE/SDC) and was developed by Clyde Soto (coordinator) and Patricio Dobrée. In Peru, it was taken on by the Flora Tristan Centre of Peruvian Women, under the charge of Ivonne Macassi Leon (coordinator), Susel Paredes Pique, Liz Ivett, Melendez Lopez and Cristhian Tohalino Reategui. Based on the reports of the four countries Pabla Avila Fernandez, Ines Reca Moreyra and Javier Quintanilla Nieva wrote up the last report.

The ILO considers commercial sexual exploitation a severe violation of the human rights of underage people, as a form of economic exploitation similar to slavery and hard labour, that in addition implies a crime on the part of those who use boys, girls and adolescents in sexual commerce.
Study Collection: Weaving Networks

The Study Collection: Weaving Networks aims to contribute to the creation of a legal institutional and cultural framework to initiate effective actions against the worst forms of child labour, particularly child domestic labour in other people’s homes and the commercial sexual exploitation of boys, girls and adolescents.

We hope to contribute with theoretical and practical elements that promote effective local, national and regional responses, in South American countries, to prevent and eradicate the causes, conditions, factors and situations of economic, social, cultural and personal vulnerability that produce different forms of exploitation of childhood and adolescence in our continent.

This Collection is a product of the “Weaving Networks Project” against the Exploitation of Boys, Girls and Adolescents, executed by ILO-IPEC in South America and financed by the United States Department of Labour.

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