

Summary

The project's objective is to prevent boys, girls and high risk youth from abandoning their homes and living in the street by means of strategies that guarantee their fundamental rights and actively involve their family, school, friends and community throughout the process.

It is an extremely innovative model of assistance to boys, girls and adolescents in risk in comparison to the traditional programs, given that it works in three dimensions: with the boys, girls and adolescents themselves, with their homes and with the community. With the first, it employs diverse methodologies according to the age and particular situation of every individual. In the first place, there are educational activities according to age carried out for those that incorporate themselves within the different project homes. For the younger ones, there are activities ranging from working with clay, arithmetic, reading and writing; and for the older ones, computer systems and training, and activities such as wood carving and jewelry making workshops that serve as a reference points to talk about the situation in which they find themselves. In addition, recreational and sports activities are carried out, using the parks and available public spaces in the communities. The courses and workshops on personal hygiene are of great importance for this type of population.

In the second place, the project considers the search in the streets for the boys, girls and adolescents in risk of or already deserted by their home and the education system and tries to motivate them to return to their homes, if they've already left, or to prevent the abandonment, if they are in the process of becoming children of the street. It visits the families and tries to understand the reason behind the situation in order to find the way to avoid it.

Equally, it works with the families with very diverse strategies. First, it's already clear that one of the elements that leads to the expulsion of the minors from their homes is the extreme poverty in which they live. Therefore, the project connects the mother, who many times is the head of the family, to training programs that allows her to have an additional income; these income – according to what various mothers have expressed – have effectively allowed them “to buy food for their children” and diminish their hunger. The direct work with the mother to

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(Home abandonment prevention: An experience of human and social development)

generate income is a very innovative element in this type of work. Additionally, given that domestic violence is another reason for their expulsion from home, the project works with the fathers, the mothers and with the entire family on the grave consequences of violence and the urgent necessity to avoid it at all cost.

With respect to the community, the heart of which faces tremendous problems of poverty and indigence, the project periodically programs informative meetings on activities that are being carried out and promotes support by members of the community for the process. These meetings also are used to divide the community into age groups – infants, pre-juveniles, juveniles, adults and displaced persons, – which participate in different recreational and fun activities that create a leisurely environment that they generally lack.

The project offers an integral model of assistance to the risk that boys, girls and adolescents in extreme poverty confront that drives them to abandon their homes and schools and thus faces a situation of extreme indigence without many possibilities to exit.