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Scientific Evidence of Social Impact to Eliminate Abuse: The PCCP Project of the Society of Jesus

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Abstract

Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to benefit from scientific knowledge. In the case of the social problem of sexual abuse, we already have scientific knowledge about what actions are most effective in prevention and response. The application of this knowledge is an indispensable tool to make real the commitment of the Catholic Church to support victims of sexual abuse in ecclesial contexts and to effectively prevent this grave adverse experience to occur again. This article claims the importance that safeguarding work in the Church has social impact. It examines the need to base safeguarding work in the Church on scientific evidence of social impact, dismantles myths regarding sexual abuse perpetrated by clergy and non-clergy in the Church and outside, and shares effective interventions in safeguarding. As pioneer of this scientific and social impact approach in safeguarding in the Church, the article also presents the worldwide strategy of the Jesuits to eliminate abuse: The Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection Project (PCCP). This large-scale project is already drawing a new path for society at large toward a world free from abuse.

Keywords

Sexual abuse, effective interventions, safeguarding, social impact, Jesuits

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Evidencia Científica de Impacto Social para Eliminar Abusos: El Proyecto PCCP de la Compañía de Jesús

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Resumen

El artículo 27 de la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos establece que toda persona tiene derecho a beneficiarse del conocimiento científico. En el problema social de los abusos sexuales, ya disponemos de conocimiento científico sobre qué acciones son más eficaces en la prevención y respuesta. La aplicación de este conocimiento es una herramienta imprescindible para hacer realidad el compromiso de la Iglesia Católica de apoyar a las víctimas de abusos sexuales en contextos eclesiales y evitar eficazmente que esta grave experiencia adversa vuelva a producirse. Este artículo reivindica la importancia de que el trabajo de protección en la Iglesia tenga impacto social. Examina la necesidad de basar dicho trabajo en evidencias científicas de impacto social, desmonta mitos relativos a los abusos sexuales perpetrados por clérigos y no clérigos en la Iglesia y fuera de ella, y comparte intervenciones efectivas en protección. Como pionera de este enfoque científico y de impacto social en la Iglesia, el artículo presenta la estrategia mundial de los Jesuitas para eliminar abusos: El proyecto Promoción de una Cultura Consistente de Protección (PCCP). Este proyecto de gran magnitud ya está trazando un nuevo camino para la sociedad en general hacia un mundo libre de abusos.

Palabras clave

Abuso sexual, intervenciones efectivas, protección, impacto social, Jesuitas

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Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) states that everyone has the right to participate in and benefit from scientific knowledge: “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”. This implies that every child, every young person, and adult, anywhere in the world and without distinction, has the right to benefit from scientific findings in any field of knowledge, medicine, or social sciences, to improve their life. This reflection is especially relevant considering Pope Francis’ *Motu Proprio* “*Vos estis lux mundi*” (‘You are the light of the world’) (Francis, 2023), which establishes a new era in the universal Catholic Church not only in breaking the silence surrounding sexual, conscience and power abuses, but more importantly, indicates the requirement to act. “*Vos estis lux mundi*” was promulgated on May 2019, and established new procedural norms to combat sexual abuse which applied to the whole Church. It was confirmed in 2023 with some additions that hold accountable not only the clergy but also the lay in Church based institutions.

This article is a contribution to make the most of this opportunity to overcome child sexual abuse and sexual harassment of adults in the Catholic Church and outside it, assuming that, for this to happen, scientific evidence of social impact is indispensable. First, it reviews widespread myths about sexual abuse in general, and clergy sexual abuse in particular (Plante, 2020). This analysis is necessary because interventions that contradict evidence cannot contribute to overcoming abuse and, in fact, if trainings and interventions are based on myths, they perpetuate abuse and re-victimize survivors. Second, the article presents actions in safeguarding that are grounded in scientific evidence, i.e., and is suggested that this approach can suit very well an effective response to the abuse crisis in the Church. Third, the article presents as best available example in the ecclesial context, the Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection (PCCP) project of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits, which now includes scientific evidence and scientific evidence of social impact in its activities at a worldwide level. Finally, the conclusion summarizes main messages and presents some recommendations. Throughout the article’s sections, reference is made to both child sexual abuse and the sexual abuse or sexual harassment of adults. Whereas, initially, both the Church and the Jesuits focused their efforts on the sexual abuse of minors, in the last years, they also accompany adult victims of different types of abuse and harassment in ecclesial contexts, and their preventive actions now also address vulnerable adults and other adults. The reason for now including adults in prevention and response actions is the current evidence of abuse of adults perpetrated by both clergy and non-clergy in the Church.

From Myth to Evidence to Eliminate Sexual Abuse in the Church and Beyond

By myths around child sexual abuse and the sexual abuse of adults is meant ideas about the causes, consequences, and solutions around sexual abuse that are not based on the available scientific evidence. The international scientific community has identified the prevalence of myths related to abuse (Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010; Oates et al., 2000; Oliver, Merodio, &

Melgar, 2021) also in the Church (Plante, 2020), as well as the negative consequences that their persistence has for overcoming this social problem (Oates et al., 2000; Oliver, Merodio, & Melgar, 2021).

Safeguarding interventions and trainings based on myths cannot help eliminating abuse because they contradict the available scientific evidence. Bringing these hoaxes to the attention of those engaged in safeguarding work and to the general public means providing them with a tool for the critical analysis of this problem, and helping them to prevent the spread of these misconceptions in everyday and professional interactions. In what follows, four myths about sexual abuse which are widespread in the Church (Plante, 2020) and outside the Church are discussed. Evidence from scientific research (Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010; Plante, 2020) that dismantles each of those myths is shared, and some implications of the myths and the evidence are introduced.

Myth 1: The Problem of Sexual Abuse is a Problem of the Catholic Church

Scientific research and statistics have shown that child sexual abuse is a troubling international reality that occurs in all countries, in the Northern and Southern hemispheres, at all socio-economic levels, in all cultures, in urban and rural areas, and in large and small communities (Barth et al., 2013; Brownridge, 2008; Finkelhor et al., 2005; Jirapramukpitak, Prince, & Harpham, 2005; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2010; Selengia, Thuy & Mushi, 2020; Stoltenborgh et al, 2011). Sexual abuse exists in families, schools, leisure centers, sports centers, parishes, camps, nightlife venues, etc (Barth et al., 2013; Stoltenborgh et al, 2011; Fogler et al., 2008; Guido, 2008). Published statistics have pointed out that in about 90% of cases, the child knows the perpetrator (Martin & Silverstone, 2013). Likewise, scientific research has shown that most cases of child sexual abuse remain under the iceberg, unreported (Martin & Silverstone, 2013; Jud, Fegert, & Finkelhor, 2016). There is a strong law of silence (*omertà*) that forces child victims to remain silent. Therefore, the numbers of the prevalence of this problem are far higher than the ones reported by statistics, and the picture of where abuse happens, in what contexts, is skewed by the imposed law of silence.

Regarding comparative data on child sexual abuse cases in society at large and in the Catholic Church, the most comprehensive study available to date, that of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (2004) which collected data on this issue for the period 1992-2000, showed that, over that period, the number of substantiated sexual abuse cases in U.S. society as a whole ranged from 89,355 to 149,800 each year. That figure was eight times the total number of alleged abuses in the Church over a 52-year period. This reality does not diminish at all the gravity of child sexual abuse and other type of abuses in the context of the Catholic Church, it is just showing that child sexual abuse is, unfortunately, a pervasive reality present in all sectors of society.

Child sexual abuse occurs in all political ideologies. An example is the good number of left-wing intellectuals who in 1977 signed the manifesto against convictions for having had sexual relations with minors or for having encouraged and photographed their sexual games¹. Among the signatories was Simone de Beauvoir. Also, Michael Foucault defended pederasty and wrote about the decriminalization of rape. Despite this, empirical research shows

that these authors continue to be taught in university classrooms and high schools as models of feminism and critical theorists, hiding to the students those authors' defense of pederasty.

The available data also indicate that child sexual abuse is not a problem exclusive to the Catholic Church. Already St. Francis Xavier, in 1549, in a letter he wrote from Kagoshima to the Companions of Goa, spoke of pedophilia in Buddhist temples (San Francisco Javier, 2017):

We often tell the Buddhist monks not to commit such ugly sins; and everything we say to them is funny to them, because they laugh at it and are not ashamed to hear reprimands for such an ugly sin. These Buddhist monks have in their monasteries many children, sons of noblemen, whom they teach to read and write, and with these they commit their wickedness, and this sin is so much in the habit, that, although it seems bad to all, they do not miss it.

In recent years, child sexual abuse has been reported in Evangelical and Protestant churches (Dastis, 2022; Pease, 2018). On a positive note, studies also show that, in some cases, various religions unite for the overcoming of this social problem, and elaborate recommendations for its elimination combining science with religious and spiritual values.

The data reviewed in this first myth have different implications. One is to help recognize that child sexual abuse is, unfortunately, a problem of society at large. The rule of silence (*omertá*) that works in all institutions make very difficult to achieve a plausible picture of the scope of this problem. The collection of more data on the prevalence of sexual abuse of children and adults in diverse institutions at the international level will advance our understanding of the scope of sexual abuse in the Church and in every social context. Such data is central to better support the victims and focus prevention efforts. Additionally, to move forward in getting such picture is indispensable to denounce and report all sexual abuses, whoever perpetrates them, wherever they occur, and regardless of one's affiliations and ideologies.

Myth 2: Celibacy is the Cause of Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church

A principle strongly emphasized in the international scientific community in order to avoid making claims that are hoaxes is that correlation does not imply causation (DeMarie-Dreblow, 1991). In a causal relationship, one fact is the cause of another. In a correlation, one fact is related to another without being able to say that one is the cause or consequence of the other. In order to establish a causal relationship, studies are needed that first ask a causality question/hypothesis in relation to two or more facts, and then use appropriate data analysis methods to answer that question/hypothesis. In the absence of those, a causal relationship between facts/traits cannot be established. This clarification is relevant for the myth discussed here and for the subsequent two.

International research has shown that celibacy does not cause the perpetration of sexual abuse, nor is there a significant relationship between celibacy and the perpetration of child sexual abuse (Manuel, 2012; Plante, 2020). On the contrary, existing empirical studies have indicated that the vast majority of child sex offenders who sexually engage and rape children are not celibate men, clerical or otherwise. Such research (Finkelhor, 1990) indicates that many pedophiles have partners or have had regular partners, and that 76% of perpetrators of child

sexual abuse are married men. The John Jay College of Criminal Justice report (2004) is blunt in this regard: "96% of priests (all of whom are celibate) were not involved in sexual abuse". And other recent data indicate the perpetration of abuse by evangelical and Protestant Church pastors, who do not have a vow of celibacy (Dastis, 2022; Pease, 2018).

This clarification is fundamental and has very important implications. If ignored, it reinforces the revised myth number one - pederasty is a problem of the Catholic Church - and places a group of people (religious or not) under suspicion of criminal behavior for their choice of how to live their sexuality. Similarly, the reproduction of the myth diverts attention from socialization and structural factors that scientific research does have shown to be related to child sexual abuse perpetration in a variety of contexts (Martin & Silverstone, 2013).

Myth 3: Homosexuality Leads to Child Sexual Abuse

That homosexual persons are more prone to pederasty is another idea that does not find support in available scientific evidence (Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010). Research is clear that child sexual abuse is the result of abusive behavior that takes advantage of a child's vulnerability and is in no way related to the sexual orientation of the abuser (Jenny, Roesler & Poyer, 1994). Furthermore, "the data contradict the myth that perpetrators of CSA are most likely to be homosexual and indicate that most cases of CSA are heterosexual" (Jenny, Roesler & Poyer, 1994). However, of the few cases of sexual abuse committed by homosexuals, these tend to be publicized in the media by pointing out the sexual orientation of the perpetrator (Cameron & Cameron, 1998). If in the few available data on child sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic clergy the greater number of victims are boys, is likely related to the fact that in the past most schools of male religious orders were only for boys.

Homosexual people, as part of the LGTBIQ+ collective, are a vulnerable group (European Commission, 2020). Maintaining this myth is a further discrimination of homosexual men, making them suspicious of being pedophiles. This has exclusionary consequences on their work, social, and personal experiences and opportunities. In addition, for the Catholic Church, maintaining this myth can reduce the possibilities of homosexuals to enter a religious order when they feel the call, make it harder for them to move forward in their formation trajectory and refrain them from entering discussions on abuse under the fear of being signaled as potential abusers. Consequently, interviews for the selection of candidates should never include any question establishing this association as well as the interviewers should never hold this myth.

Myth 4: Victims of Child Sexual Abuse Become Perpetrators of (Child) Sexual Abuse Themselves

Among the myths associated with the perpetration of sexual abuse, perhaps the most widespread and even present in safeguarding trainings in the Church and outside, is that those who have suffered violence against children (sexual and otherwise) become future pedophiles and perpetrators of abuses. Scientific evidence does not support a causal relationship between having been sexually abused in childhood and being a pedophile or other type of abuser later in life (Oliver, Merodio, & Melgar, 2021; Holt, Buckley, & Whelan, 2008; Margolin & Gordis,

2000; Widom, 1989). As noted before, correlation does not imply causation (DeMarie-Dreblow, 1991); that two facts may seem to be related in some cases does not mean that one is the cause of the other. Figures provided by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice study (2004) indicated that less than 7% of priests who had committed child sexual abuse offenses had been physically, sexually or emotionally abused as children.

The scientific community has already pointed out that disseminating this idea is unscientific and unethical, and has serious consequences for survivors of violence against children (Oliver, Merodio & Melgar, 2021). Putting the label of potential child molester or abuser on a person who was a victim of violence in childhood re-victimizes her by presenting her as a potential criminal, affecting the survivor's resilience and overall socio-emotional development. When this hoax is included in conversations and manifested in interactions in educational centers, seminaries, religious life communities, etc., the result is that what should be safe spaces become otherwise spaces that generate experiences that re-trigger toxic stress, which very adverse health outcomes have been strongly demonstrated (Kathryn, 2019; Melgar, 2023-2025; Pietromonaco & Collins, 2017). Indeed, there are cases of survivors of clergy perpetrated child sexual abuse and child sexual abuse generally who have found associations and social movements for the elimination of child sexual abuse and to support other victims to become survivors. These cases need to be widely communicated. In relation to the selection of candidates in religious orders, same recommendations as in myth number three apply here.

Effective Interventions in Safeguarding: A Social Impact Approach to Overcome Abuse Inside and Outside the Church

In the foreword of the Motu Proprio "Vos estis lux mundi", Pope Francis (2023) points out in relation to sexual abuse:

In order that these phenomena, in all their forms, never happen again, a continuous and profound conversion of hearts is needed, attested by *concrete and effective actions* that *involve everyone in the Church*, so that personal sanctity and moral commitment can contribute to promoting the full credibility of the Gospel message and the effectiveness of the Church's mission.

These words include two key messages. First, concrete, and effective action involving everyone in the Church is needed to overcome sexual abuse. Second, on this depends promoting the credibility and effectiveness of the Church. Both messages are consistent with the need to incorporate scientific evidence into the Church's protection work. We discuss it in what follows but we need to make a clarification first. Not all scientific evidence can achieve that outcome of effectiveness. In this sense, it is important to differentiate between 'scientific evidence' and 'scientific evidence of social impact'.

There is, for example, scientific knowledge derived from research that describes well how and why abuse occurs but has not provided knowledge on how to successfully contribute to reducing it. This early evidence can become the basis for further research that will produce evidence of social impact. What protection delegates around the world urgently need is

scientific evidence of social impact, which tells us which practices prevent abuse, eliminate it, and contribute to creating a consistent culture of protection, care, and dignity of all.

The scientific literature has well explained why the united action of the whole community, without fissures, is necessary. Studies indicate that perpetrators of abuse are not alone, but have allies, accomplices, who participate in the abuse more or less directly, with some people feeling attracted by the aggressors' power and providing them with a social circle of support (Thapa et al., 2013). Such collaboration ranges from overt supports for the abuser to attacks on those who defend the victims (i.e., isolating violence), to silencing the abuse, concealing it, or looking at somewhere else. By acting this way, accomplices give the message to the abuser that he can do it because he has social support facilitated both by direct collaborations and others who will not say anything. For this reason, the programs and actions that are most effective in preventing and responding to abuse are those in which the entire community is an active part of prevention.

In the discussion of effective safeguarding programs and interventions, it is also worth noting the difference between programs that are successful in a specific context (geographic, cultural, socio-economic, pastoral, etc.), and those that prevent and eliminate abuse in any context in which they are rigorously implemented in dialogue with the community.

The Choice for Evidence of Social Impact in the Strategy for the Elimination of Abuse of the Society of Jesus: The Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection project

In General Congregation 36, the supreme legislative body of the Society of Jesus, which took place in 2016, the Jesuits recognized that child sexual abuse was also a problem in the Order, that abuses had been perpetrated by Jesuits and cases covered up. The new Superior General was asked to initiate mechanisms to respond to this within the Order and in its works. Since then, the Society of Jesus had publicly recognized (Sosa, 2018) the devastating physical, psychological and spiritual consequences that these abuses have produced and continue to produce in the victims, as well as in their families and environments. The Order has asked for forgiveness and is investing in efforts and actions so that this does not happen again (Sosa, 2019).

As part of this response, 2018 saw the launch of the Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection Project (PCCP), the Society of Jesus' global strategy to prevent abuse, initially focused on minors and now also including vulnerable adults and adults in general. Since overcoming abuses affecting children and adolescents, as well as adults, is a matter of social justice, the PCCP project is housed in the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology (SJES) of the Jesuit General Curia in Rome.

Since its inception, the focus of the PCCP Project is to promote the design and implementation of policies, protocols, and training for effective abuse prevention and response in all Provinces, Regions, and Networks of the Society of Jesus. Through all its work, PCCP aids the realization of one of the Universal Apostolic Preferences (2019-2029) of the Jesuit Order, specifically, the Apostolic Preference number 2, which reads:

We commit ourselves to help eliminate abuses inside and outside the Church, seeking to ensure that victims are heard and properly helped, that justice is done, and that harm is healed. This commitment includes the adoption of clear policies for the prevention of abuse, the ongoing formation of those who are committed to mission, and serious efforts to identify the social origins of abuse. In this way, we effectively promote a culture that safeguards all vulnerable persons, especially minors (Sosa, 2019).

The management of cases does not fall under the competence of PCCP. All Jesuit Provinces, Regions and Networks around the world have mechanisms to deal with allegations and complaints in their settings. These mechanisms include clear protocols to handle complaints related to past and current abuse cases, measures to accompany victims and their families, and reparation and compensation policies.

Objectives and Lines of Work of PCCP

PCCP, at its constitution, had two objectives: 1) To map and assess the situation of protection across the Society of Jesus in order to inform the Superior General of the Jesuits and his Council of the current situation of protection across the Society of Jesus and, 2) To facilitate networking and collaboration through different structures.

Since its inception, PCCP has carried out central tasks and made very significant achievements that have been encompassed, until 2023, in these three progressive lines of work:

- **1st line.** In 2019, the situation of protection across the Society of Jesus was mapped and assessed through a global baseline survey in all 80 Jesuit Provinces and Regions across the world in relation to: a) guidelines for ethical behavior and safe environments, b) protocols for dealing with allegations and case management and, c) training. In addition, safeguarding delegates were appointed for each of the six Jesuit Conferences, which are administrative divisions of the world, thus creating a global support structure for the mission of overcoming abuse. These delegates meet periodically to share knowledge, progress, challenges in policy development, training and culturally and contextually appropriate protocols across the Society of Jesus. In 2020, the data collected was analyzed and a report was written that provided an overview of protection throughout the Society of Jesus.
- **2nd line.** In 2021 and 2022, prevention was promoted, and Provinces and Regions were assisted in the development of culturally and ministerially appropriate guidelines, protocols and ongoing training/formation. This advanced and intensified the work that had begun in the Provinces, Conferences, networks and ministries. Throughout this time, PCCP offered accompaniment and advise in the effort to promote a consistent culture of protection.
- **3rd line.** In addition, a global audit was designed in 2022 to know the status of the implementation of protection guidelines. Fifteen indicators were employed which related to three standards: 1) Policy and guidelines for ethical behaviour and safe environments; 2) Protocols for dealing with allegations and case management; 3) Training and formation for Jesuits and collaborators. All Provinces and Regions of the Society of Jesus responded to the audit, providing details that have made it possible to know the state of protection in all Jesuit Provinces and Regions in the world.

Apart from this, the main networks of the Society of Jesus, such as the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Fe y Alegría (FyA) and the Xavier Network, have been engaged in safeguarding work and have now safeguarding delegates, policies, and protocols, and are also providing

protection training for their staff and beneficiaries. In total, this means that millions of children and adults in Jesuit works in the five continents, many in situations of high vulnerability, are benefiting from key standards in safeguarding.

A Worldwide Safeguarding Strategy Oriented to Social Impact

With the information on the progress made in protection in all the Jesuit Provinces and Regions, a fourth line of work, focused on follow-up and preventive actions, began in January 2023. This stage has been characterized by the option of basing actions on scientific knowledge on abuse and, specifically, on scientific evidence of social impact, always in dialogue with Ignatian spirituality. Why the grounding on science? The objective of PCCP is not to promote doing safeguarding in Jesuit works and institutions, but to promote safeguarding that achieves social impact, i.e., that effectively reduces, prevents, and eliminates abuses. In 2023 this was translated primarily into training based on evidence of social impact and on effective interventions in safeguarding. In what follows, two examples of the beginning of this fourth strand of work are shared.

Jesuit Formation to Dismantle Myths

In February 2023, the PCCP coordinators trained about seventy scholastics from around the world in Manila (Philippines). Scholastics are at the beginning of their formation as Jesuits. Their Jesuit formators were also present. The training included explaining myths surrounding sexual abuse, and the scientific evidence that dismantles them, offering all scholastics the original sources where the data could be checked by themselves. The training had an important impact on the attendees, with many facial expressions showing the liberating effect of having this knowledge. Some participants shared in public their concerns, experiences, and questions related to abuses of different kinds. Although the session was scheduled for one hour, the subsequent informal dialogue with some of the scholastics who had excellent questions extended the training space for another hour. Dismantling myths about sexual abuse and the clergy is critical in the formation of religious persons. Among other benefits, both survivors of child sexual abuse and homosexuals had the opportunity to free themselves from fear and guilt and gained rigorous information to be able to respond when they hear hoaxes that victimize them. Myth-busting formation can be healing for victims, and essential to everyone -including formators- to avoid reproducing hoaxes that revictimize.

PCCP has also trained in scientific evidence at the final stage of Jesuit formation. In May 2023, PCCP gave various seminars to a group of Tertians (Jesuits at the end of their formation) in Beirut (Lebanon). These participants were also from around the world. The nine-hour training involved prior reading of three scientific articles by each participant and subsequent group discussion, following the format of scientific dialogic gatherings, one effective intervention in safeguarding. The articles read and discussed, published in top ranked scientific journals, dealt with key topics such as new advances in the conceptualization of consent. The dialogue with the group was continuous, allowing Jesuits in

formation to relate the contents to their knowledge, experiences, concerns, ministries, realities in their Provinces, cultural differences, etc.

Both trainings, in Manila and Beirut, are an example of offering core scientific knowledge to the human capital of the Society of Jesus, many of whom will have a leadership role worldwide at some point in their life as a Jesuit.

Scientific Training for Social Impact in Key Global Jesuit Networks: The Xavier Network and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)

Training on effective interventions in safeguarding for personnel of important networks of the Society of Jesus has also been key. In March 2023, training was provided to senior staff of all the organizations that make up the Xavier Network, which unites 14 members, mission offices and non-governmental development organizations of the Jesuit Provinces of Europe, North America and Australia working in faith to promote justice. The Network works in more than 87 countries, carrying out projects in close collaboration with local partners in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The PCCP training was framed within the already rigorous work of this Network in the field of protection, and focused on effective interventions in safeguarding, presenting to the participants, Jesuits and lay collaborators, the concrete effective interventions, their scientific basis, how they work in practice, and the quantitative and qualitative evidence of the social impact they achieve in different parts of the world. The group agreed on a progressive implementation of some effective interventions in the projects they support in very vulnerable contexts in the global South.

The Xavier Network has promoted Effective interventions in contexts of vulnerability through the publication of a call open to a diversity of social projects in the field of protection that have succeeded in reducing abuse and creating a culture of protection. Specifically, the Network published a call for applications for the awarding of effective interventions in safeguarding. The evaluation criteria made it clear that the award was for protection work with social impact. Thus, the criteria included evidence of the impact of the protection work, for example, requiring presenting data on violence reduction and changes in the community because of the intervention. It also pointed out that "the evaluation criteria do not favor protection work that has many beneficiaries if that work is not associated with positive changes".

The diversity of contexts and people trained by PCCP has also included the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), this time in Kenya. In April 2023, PCCP intensively trained 30 persons in charge of educational, psycho-social and health projects in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, one of the largest refugee camps in Africa, serving about 200,000 people, from infants to the elderly, and including projects for individuals with disabilities and women victims of gender violence. The PCCP training took place in Nairobi, and focused primarily on effective interventions in safeguarding, their scientific basis, their implementation, and evidence of their impact in preventing abuse and creating a consistent culture of protection also with refugee groups and children in special education.

Moving Forward and Going Deeper: A Worldwide Safeguarding Training and Formation Programme for Social Impact in All Jesuit Works

The actions reported above were a prologue of a wider project. In July 2023, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus (Sosa, 2023) approved a new programme of safeguarding training and formation for social impact led by PCCP. Fr. General launched this programme worldwide in December 2023. This project is addressed to all Jesuits and lay partners in Jesuit works and institutions around the world and in all areas in which the Jesuits are present: presecondary and secondary education, higher education, informal education, social works, spiritual direction, promotion of faith, and Jesuit formation.

At this moment, a curriculum is being designed for every area, with different phases, courses, and modules according to every area and participants' profiles and needs. This new programme of global training and formation is grounded in evidence from all disciplines on how to successfully prevent and respond to different types of abuse (sexual, power, conscience, spiritual), and it stresses training in scientific evidence of social impact. Some of its key contents include consent in adult-to-adult relationships, unequal distribution of power in social structures and abuse, effective interventions in safeguarding, myths and evidence about clergy sexual abuse and sexual abuse in general, sources of scientific evidence about abuse, elimination of isolating gender violence, and relationship between abuse victimization and health outcomes.

Three areas have been prioritized for the start of this program in 2024: Presecondary and secondary education, Jesuit formation, and higher education. The criteria employed for this selection have been: 1) already existing systematization of safeguarding training; 2) available on-line platforms for training delivery. The curriculums, as the overall programme, are being designed in a dialogic manner, following the principle of co-creation. This means that while scientific knowledge has been chosen in the light of the social impact objectives of the programme, the contents are enriched via dialogue with delegates from the different areas (school education, higher education, Jesuit formation, etc) in every Jesuit conference, with the Secretaries of every main area in the General Government of the Society of Jesus, with the safeguarding teams and directors of every Jesuit Network, with Major Superiors in the Provinces, and survivors. These dialogues are crucial to enrich the programme socio-culturally and make it resonate the most in every context. Additionally, the programme in every area will include a module on a sound theology of safeguarding and Ignatian spirituality, thus marrying theory and Ignatian spirituality with the most updated scientific knowledge on effective prevention and response to abuse.

Conclusion

With "Vos estis lux mundi", work on protection has become a requirement for all religious Orders and dioceses. While this instruction is excellent news, it has already opened the door to the risk of doing protection work instead of doing protection work that has social impact, i.e., that does contribute to eliminating abuse. The suffering of the victims and the implications of

abuse for the future of our world should not allow for anything other than investing safeguarding efforts and time in the Church (and in other social institutions) that translate into social impact in the Church and in society at large. Social impact is central also as a matter of accountability to the victims, to the whole Church, and to all citizens.

As discussed before in this article in relation to the UDHR Article 27, those who enroll in any safeguarding training have the right to be trained in best scientific knowledge on abuse prevention and response. Likewise, benefiting from such scientific knowledge is what every person in any Church work deserves. If a comparison with medicine is established, there is no room for discussion about this right. It is essential then, that safeguarding programmes, diplomas, courses, etc, commit to this human right, demonstrate how they do so, and are assessed according to this criterion.

Importantly, it is key that social impact measurement of safeguarding training, actions, protocols, and policies employs the indicators that have already been elaborated by the international scientific community in social impact measurement. There is a growing industry of companies and groups in this area too that are not applying such knowledge but using other indicators that are not informing of actual elimination or reduction of abusive relationships; instead, most of the time the indicators refer to number of participants, number of beneficiaries, opinion of participants, showcase in social media, etc. Those indicators do not speak of abuse decrease and greater prevention which is the commitment of the Church.

The Society of Jesus is pioneer in opting for scientific research to ground its worldwide strategy for the overcoming of abuse and integrating this with a sound theology of safeguarding and Ignatian spirituality. Now, a new training and formation program for all Jesuit works across the world has been launched with this approach, and will reach millions of children, adolescents, and adults worldwide. The rolling-out of this programme has recently started. This groundbreaking plan constitutes an opportunity to accompany victims in their healing, and to contribute to create safe environments grounded in quality human relationships for minors and adults, Jesuits and the lay, in very diverse cultures in the five continents. Grounded in scientific evidence of social impact, the PCCP project in general, and this new training and formation program of extraordinary scope in particular, represent an inspiration for society at large on how to prevent the pervasive social problem of sexual abuse and other type of abuses in our world.

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