

**Conference**  
**Preventing sexual abuse of children**  
**Madrid, 10-11 December 2013**

**Zero Tolerance for violence**

**Ms Elena Saura,**  
**Department of Social Integration, La Caixa Foundation (Spain)**

**Summary**

Since it was first established, the main objective of the charitable foundation “la Caixa” has been to contribute to the wellbeing of people, especially those from the most vulnerable groups, in terms of sustainable social development.

Various experts believe that any child or teenager can be a victim of sexual abuse, irrespective of his or her social background. It is important to strengthen factors of protection in the development of children such as self-esteem, good communication with one’s parents, the ability to express feelings and respect for one’s own limits.

Programmes to protect children at risk  
Zero-tolerance of violence

Violence is not “innate” but something that is “learned”. On this premise, the programme begins with a series of initiatives to raise public awareness of the magnitude and gravity of the problem, to work closely with young people to prevent violent behaviour, to train teachers to help them identify and deal with situations of violence and also help the most direct victims of violence, i.e. women.

Since 2009 the following programmes have been set up:

An educational programme aimed at teachers and pupils in primary and secondary schools. The training activities proposed in the educational programme are a mixture of face-to-face sessions and virtual training sessions which, on the basis of the teaching staff’s experience, provides the theoretical basis required for addressing the issue. This assists teachers in drawing up and implementing a project for the prevention of violence.

The educational programme for pupils involves workshops designed to raise awareness of gender-related discrimination, to teach them to develop respectful and egalitarian relationships and to identify symptoms of violence, to foster discussions on sexist behaviour and strengthen factors of protection.

A programme of psycho-social support aimed at women who are victims of male violence against women, using a model of intervention based on resilience. The programme is linked to the various programmes of the “la Caixa” foundation with the aim of providing an overall response to women and doing as much as possible to facilitate their recovery. The necessary resources have been adapted to deal with vulnerable groups with problems which require a specific approach (people with disabilities and immigrant women).

A programme of psycho-social support for children exposed to gender-based violence. This programme was launched in 2013 with the aim of identifying situations of abuse, to prepare professionals to undertake group work and help such children to recover. A pilot project is currently in progress. Once validated psycho-social support groups for mothers and their children will be set up.

#### Caixa Proinfancia

This body was set up in 2007 with the aim of breaking the vicious circle of poverty, fostering integral development and increasing opportunities for children at risk. There are educational, health and relational dimensions to this model of action and the key aspects are comprehensive care and a holistic view of situations of vulnerability, the family perspective, networking and empowerment. The family plays a key role as it takes an active part and has shared responsibility for the process of recovery.

**Useful link:**

[http://obrasocial.lacaixa.es/laCaixaFoundation/home\\_en.html](http://obrasocial.lacaixa.es/laCaixaFoundation/home_en.html)