Research conducted with patients treated at the Charité Hospital's Institute of Sexology and Sexual Medicine in Berlin showed that men who are sexually interested in children and fear to commit an offence (potential offenders) or either have already committed an offence but are unknown to the justice system (Dunkelfeld offenders) may be reached for therapy via media. Based on these results a media campaign was conceptualized. In 2002 this concept was presented at the 7th Conference of the IATSO in Vienna (Austria, EU), and awarded 2nd prize. In 2005 this media campaign was fully developed and implemented as part of the Prevention Project Dunkelfeld, a research project aimed at reducing child sexual abuse. By means of posters, billboards, print-media advertisements, cinema and television spots, web site and bannners men who are concerned about their sexual preference for children and in search of treatment were made aware of the Institute of Sexology and Sexual Medicine at Berlin's Charité providing diagnostic clarification of their problem and therapeutic help within a research project, free of charge and absolutely confidential.

The problem
The present state of knowledge regarding the number of offences which are not reported, i.e. which occur in the so called “Dunkelfeld” (engl. dark field), tells us that all of types of offences, this number is the highest for sexual offences against young women and children. The German word Dunkelfeld refers to the segment of incidences that remain undetected by the authorities and, unlike the cases in the “HeißeII” (engl. light field), are not accounted for in official statistics. That most sexual offences stay undetected with by the justice system is reflected in the results of representative studies of the general population. They indicate that 13.3% of women (Dansky et al., 1997), 8.6% of girls and 2.8% of boys (Wetzes, 1997) have become victims of a sexual offence in their lives. At the same time the political focus is exclusively on handling and punishment of offenders in the HeißeII, that is of those sexual offenders who have become victims of a sexual offence in their lives. At the same time the political focus is exclusively on handling and punishment of offenders in the Hellfeld, that is of those sexual offenders who have already sexually offended against children but are not (yet) known to the justice system (real Dunkelfeld offenders). Two of the inclusion criteria were that they must be aware of the problematic nature of their sexual impulses and be self-motivated to seek treatment.

The project
Participants are both men who have not (yet) sexually offended against children but fear they may do so if they are not helped (potential Dunkelfeld offenders) and men who already have sexually offended against children but are not (yet) known to the justice system (real Dunkelfeld offenders). Two of the inclusion criteria were that they must be aware of the problematic nature of their sexual impulses and be self-motivated to seek treatment.

The media campaign
The ability to access potential or real sexual abusers of children in the Dunkelfeld through the media was investigated in a research project conducted with outpatients treated for sexual arousal to children at the Charité's Sexological Institute. Based on the results of this study the media campaign was conceptualized. The study and concept were awarded 2nd prize at the 7th Conference IATSO in Vienna (Austria, EU) 2002. The media campaign consisted of interviews and reports in electronic and print media, on TV, on radio, advertisements in print media, cinemas, TV and the internet (banner) as well as billboards and poster-ads in hospitals and public pools. The gist of the prevention project’s motto is “So that fantasies do not turn into offences”. The media campaign’s claim is “Do you love children more than you like?”, and the delivered message is “You are not guilty because of your sexual desire, but you are responsible for your sexual behaviour. There is Help! Don’t become an offender!” All information and contact details are available at the project’s website www.kein-taeter-werden.de (engl. “don’t-become-an-offender”); Mail: praevention@charite.de, Fon: 49-30-450 529 450.

Due to the professional public relations efforts the prevention project’s campaign has been positively received by the public. In more than 300 media reports in total (print, TV, radio, Internet) it was possible to achieve high quality contributions of a factual nature. This positive representation of the project created an awareness in the community that preventive therapy for potential offenders is active child protection and an important contribution to the primary prevention of child sexual abuse.

The professional public relations work including the project’s media campaign was possible through the generous probono support of the Media Campaign was conceptualized. In 2002 this concept was presented at the 7th Conference IATSO in Vienna (Austria, EU) 2002. The media campaign was fully developed and implemented as part of the Prevention Project Dunkelfeld, a research project aimed at reducing child sexual abuse. The present state of knowledge regarding the number of offences which are not reported, i.e. which occur in the so called “Dunkelfeld” (engl. dark field), tells us that all of types of offences, this number is the highest for sexual offences against young women and children.

The sample results
To date (August 2006) more than 400 men inquired about the project, more than 250 were interviewed on telephone, of which 210 took part in the clinical assessment at the Institute of Sexology and Sexual Medicine. Since the beginning of 2006 more than 100 participants could be included in the preventive therapy program.

Acknowledgment
The research project is funded by the Volkswagen-Stiftung, Hannover (Germany, EU). The project’s media campaign was supported by the Hänse+Gretel-Stiftung, Karlsruhe (Germany, EU). The development and implementation of the media campaign was possible through the generous probono support of the Advertising Agency Scholz & Friends (www. s-f.com) in Berlin / Hamburg (Germany, EU).

References

Figure 1: The Prevention Project’s website.
Figure 2: The difference between the “Dunkelfeld” and the “HeißeII”.
Figure 3: The Prevention Project’s website.
Figure 4: More than 1000 sponsored posters were placed in hospitals and public pools and over 1000 sponsored billboards in public areas of Berlin over a period of three months.
Figure 5: More than 50 reports about the project have been aired on TV- and radio channels.
Figure 6: More than 300 reports about the project were published in newspapers, magazines and on the internet.
Figure 7a+b: Screenshots of the cinema- and TV-spot, which was shown for free (公益广告) over 150 times in several German TV-Channels and Berlin Cinemas.
Figure 8: More than 150 sponsored placements of the project’s campaign image in newspapers and magazines and also as a banner on different websites.