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DNA-Prokids Helps Identify More Than 200 Missing Children

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The Health Sciences Center of the University of North Texas and the University of Granada collaborate in DNA – Prokids, an international project aimed at fighting against traffic in children using the latest techniques in genetic identification of human beings.

Upon suggestion of the Laboratory of Genetic Identification of the University of Granada, an international project for genetic identification of missing children and their families was set up in 2004. Last May, the project was presented worldwide, with the contributions of financial institutions such as BBVA, Fundación Botín (Banco Santander) and CajaGRANADA, as well as the support of the Regional Counsellor for Justice of the Andalusian Government (Spain). In June, 2009, The Life Technologies Foundation, from the USA, awarded 500.000 USD in cash and 200.000 USD in reactants and other fungibles to DNA- Prokids.

Data

The Laboratory of Genetic Identification of the University of Granada has reported that, up to June, more than 200 disappeared children have been identified thanks to the genetic identification of victims of human trafficking. Specifically, there have been 203 identifications in Mexico, Guatemala, the Philippines, India, Brazil, Indonesia, Honduras, Ecuador, Malaysia and Thailand.

In all the cases, it was suspected that children had been kidnapped from their families or sold by them. Combined work of police and judges, in collaboration with the Laboratory of Genetic Identification, allowed finding the scientific evidence that made possible to save the children from the abominable crime they were suffering. Thus, children were returned to their families and one of the objectives of the program was achieved: the prevention of illegal adoptions of kidnapped, stolen or trafficked children, by checking the biological link between children and their relatives who put them up for adoption.



From October 2009, after the meeting of international experts is held, DNA – Prokids will strengthen the fight against traffic in children, multiplying the number of identifications, improving knowledge about the routes and the means of this crime, creating a worldwide database with genetic information of missing children, training experts on genetic identification, etc.

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