ICDP IN MALAWI

Report Compiled by Paul Mmanjamwada

The case of ICDP in Malawi has been Phenomenal. ICDP started in Lilongwe and Blantyre districts of Malawi under Chisomo Childrens Club and in Nkhotakota district under Alinafe Hospital. These were the Partners that piloted the concept in Malawi. Yes the two organizations grasped the concept and it proved that ICDP was the answer to so many psychosocial challenges that children of Malawi face.

Newly crowned IDCP facilitators in the lakeshore district of Nkhatabay showcasing their Diplomas

The scaling up of the concept has been phenomenal. Now the concept has spread to all the three regions of Malawi. Recently 12 facilitors were honored with diplomas in Nkhatabay after finalizing both the theory and the practicals. Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM) with support from Norwegian Church Aid has integrated the ICDP concept in its community programmes. The newly trained facilitators are from different community projects EAM is implementing in Nkhatabay district

ICDP, a solution to those affected by Floods

In 2015 Malawi faced the worst of floods of all time. A quarter of a million people, had been affected by the devastating floods that ripped through Malawi. 230,000 people were forced to flee their homes and many of them have been unable to return and rebuild their lives. The worst affected area was the lower shire areas in the district of Chikwawa and Nsanje. The scale of the disaster wreaked havoc on Malawi which is a densely populated country, where most people survive from subsistence farming. Crops of maize which is the staple food had been destroyed, villages obliterated, homes swept away and livestock killed. About 47% of Malawi's children are already stunted, which is caused by undernutrition, so they are particularly vulnerable.

Through Catholic health Commission (Chikwawa diocese), ICDP was introduced to those that had been affected by floods in Nsanje considering the trauma and psychological challenges that the people had been going through. ICDP came as a relief to the communities as they learnt more on how they can consolidate their love to children who had lost their parents and their beloved ones because of the floods. The lower shire alone has now has 15 qualified ICDP facilitators and 60 Trained ICDP caregivers.

"The concept has come at the right time for the people of Nsanje district as it will help and support the people to cope with stress, "concluded Louis

ICDP in Moslem dominant area of Balaka

ICDP has also penetrated the Moslem dominant district of Balaka district. Through the Quadria Muslim Association of Malawi, the National Trainers have been able to train 15 facilitators who are central to scale up the programme in the district. This is seen as a plus especially considering that only Christian organization had been used before to disseminate the information about ICDP

In Total 54 facilitators have been qualified this year alone in Malawi after the intensive training and practicals that they underwent through the mentorship of the national Trainers.

A Network meeting in Nkhotakota

A network meeting was organized to basically share experiences and also welcome new players into the network. The partners present included Norwegian church aid which actually coordinates all the activities in Malawi, Alinafe community hospital and Chisomo Childrens Club who are the pioneers of ICDP in Malawi. New organizations that attended the network meeting included Community of St Egidio (DREAM Programme), Chikwawa health commission, Quadria Muslim Association of Malawi and Evangelical Association of Malawi. The network meeting also took the opportunity to collect all success stories from all the partners to come up with another compilation of ICDP stories from Malawi. A booklet for ICDP stories will be published in 2017.

Participants to the Network meeting in Nkhotakota included staff from Alinafe community hospital, NCA, EAM, QMAM and DREAM

Translation of the ICDP Handbook into Chichewa

The Process of translating the facilitators ICDP handbook from English into Chichewa which is the national language is still ongoing. This is a breakthrough in as far the history of ICDP in Malawi is concerned. Most of the facilitors find it hard to use the English version in facilitating the sessions in the communities. Once the handbook is completed it will ease the difficulties that some facilitors were facing in training of caregivers

ICDP Integrated with Primary Health Care

By Paul Mmanjamwada

I went to Alinafe community hospital to monitor the implementation of ICDP. Alinafe community hospital has been one of the pioneers of ICDP in Malawi alongside Chisomo Childrens Club. Alinafe community hospital is situated in Nkhotakota district about 170 km away from Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, where Norwegian Church Aid is based. Upon arrival I met a group of trained ICDP caregivers and facilitators.

Paul Mmanjamwada (seated in front) discussing with some trained ICDP facilitators and caregivers at Alinafe hospital

It was pleasing to note how the hospital has integrated ICDP in its activities over the years. Alinafe community hospital has integrated ICDP in its Nutritional Rehabilitation activities, Orphan care activities and Early Child hood care and Development (ECD) activities. One thing that interested me most is the way the hospital has now integrated ICDP in the Primary Health Care (PHC) activities which is a new concept for the institution. One service that is clear is that as the hospital staff conduct immunization and vaccination campaigns in the villages and communities surrounding the hospital, they also make sure that ICDP is central in message dissemination. Nkhotakota district alone has 25 facilitators who are from various departments of the hospital, Ministry of education, police and the church.

“We are as motivated as ever.” Lamented Gertrude Msowoya who is the national trainer for ICDP and also the coordinator at the hospital

This year alone, the hospital has trained 22 caregivers from new community kitchens of msolowamphako and Mwalawambira 2. The community kitchens are important as they teach women to show love to their children by cooking and preparing for them nutritional foods. This year Malawi because of shortage of rains is likely going to face hunger as such this component is very crucial in meeting the nutritional needs of vulnerable children.

Some Pictures about ICDP in Malawi

The National Trainer facilitating a session for facilitators in Nsanje district

Gertrude Msowoya, a National Trainer, presenting a Diploma to one of the qualified Facilitators

The facilitators also conducted role plays in Nsanje district