

A historic meeting in Arusha, formation of the ICDP Tanzania network



Report by Gunnar Eide

Two events took place in Tanzania in different parts of the country in September 2025. One was a training in Dar es Salam and the other an historic event in Arusha. More than 50 facilitators and 11 trainers from 4 different parts of northern Tanzania were gathered for the biggest ICDP seminar ever held in Tanzania, together with 5 guests from Norway.

At the seminar, Grete Flakk from Norway, told the participants the story of ICDP Tanzania since its beginnings in Moshi in 2004. She invited Lui Mfangavo, Egla Matechi and Velynice Monyo to talk about their experiences as facilitators and trainers, who have been active from the very early days and still are today. Gunnar Eide from Fo Norway (Norwegian association of social workers) continued the story describing how ICDP was brought to Haydom in 2013, with Martha Massawe as coordinator, and then later on, from 2015, the programme's outreach was expanded to other towns and villages in the Manyara region, through cooperation with TASWO (Tanzanian association of social workers) and with Ezekiel Assecheck as coordinator. First groups of facilitators were trained in Arusha in 2017, and then in Singida in 2019. The link to Moshi has been there all the time with Egla and Velynice

as trainers of all new facilitators. And then finally, in 2024, eight of the facilitators were trained as trainers by Patrick O'Loughlin and Chiku Ali.

Several of the participants expressed their joy at getting to know the story of ICDP in Tanzania, as well as their pride of belonging to a larger community.

In addition to this the seminar focused on various topics related to both theory and practice: Daniel Kasikiwe from Arusha talked about early childhood and parenting care and compared ICDP with other public programmes in Tanzania, followed by Grete who talked about the characteristics of ICDP and asked if ICDP fits in all cultural contexts. This led to a conversation about Tanzanian traditions with either positive and negative aspects. Godwin Hilary from Singida talked about their experiences of the fight against FGM (female genital mutilation) in their region and how important it is to include this in the ICDP groups. Eglá Matechi initiated a talk about challenges in working with sensitization and how to become better at implementing this in practice.

An important topic was how ICDP has influenced the participants' own lives. Herson from Haydom told a touching story about his personal growth after attending ICDP. In his tribe it is the women's job to raise daughters and men's job to raise sons. His problem was that he had no sons but 8 daughters. He decided that this had to change, he informed his tribe and challenged them as well. And today he has a close and good relationship with his daughters'. "Sometimes they come to me instead of my wife when there is something they want to share or ask about," he proudly finished.



To bring it all together an ICDP Tanzania Network was established on 22nd of September 2025. The interim group will be looking at how best to bring ICDP forward in Tanzania. Based on this Heidi Westborg Steel from ICDP Norway asked the facilitators at the workshop to dream about how ICDP might look like in their regions in the future.

Finally, it is important to say something about the atmosphere during the seminar. In good Tanzanian spirit there was a lot of singing and dancing. This is a good example of tradition with very positive outcomes!