

Karsten Hundeide and Henning Rye: The early history, development and basic values of ICDP

The following is an updated version of the notes which formed the background for our joint lecture held at the ICDP conference in Denmark 2010

The friendship and collaboration between Karsten and Henning that led eventually to the development of ICDP, goes back more than 50 years.



(Photo: Karsten) We were, from 1957, both members of an international organization called SUBUD (SUBUD is an acronym formed from the initial letters of the Sanskrit words Susila Budhi Dharma). Subud is an organization of people seeking spiritual development. In the 1970s and 1980s we acted as chair and vice-chair respectively of the social arm of Subud, the "Subud Brotherhood International Foundation (SBIF)".



Already at that time, through SBIF, we focused on helping children's psychosocial development, and the first project we started and developed together was the Alfragide project in Portugal, located in the north-east of Lisbon. The project started in 1980, financed by NORAD (The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation). Several Portuguese friends were involved, including Teresa Irina and Pedro Iksan Mendes (on photo). The background for starting this project was the liberation of Portuguese colonies like Mozambique, Cap Verde and Angola, which brought about one million refugees to Portugal, many settling in the Alfragide area of Lisbon. The kindergarten project continued to develop after we left and blossomed into a community project called Roda Viva, which today encompasses a nursery, a school, a programme for children with special needs, parent counselling, etc. The evaluation of the Alfragide project in 1985 was very positive and in that connection an international seminar called "Children in Need" was held in Lisbon. This seminar highlighted the international need for preventive psychosocial measures and after this seminar Karsten became involved in the evaluation of the situation of children in children's homes in Sri Lanka.

The evaluation results revealed the urgent need for a psychosocial intervention programme.

At that time Karsten had already been working as a psychologist for a number of years, first in an institution for the intellectually challenged, then as a school psychologist and shortly after that he became a professor at the University of Oslo.



(Photo: Henning) Henning had, at the beginning of the 1980s, finished his specialist training in child and youth psychiatry, and held from 1980 the position of chief psychologist at the Central Institute of Habilitation, Berg Gård, in Oslo. We were both very aware of the new scientific studies in child development, including the attachment tradition after Bowlby, the new understanding of caregiver-child communication as an

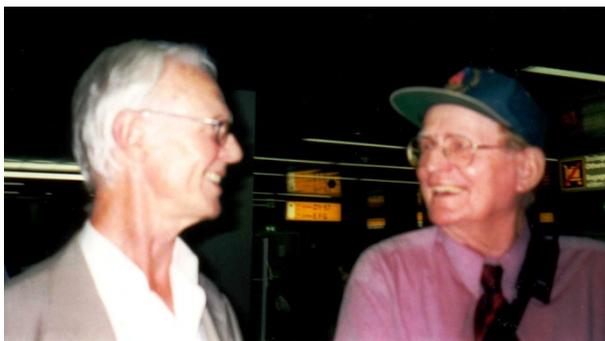
important factor for children's mental and emotional development (Colwyn Trevarthen, Daniel Stern, among others), and the new knowledge developed in the field of mediated learning by Pnina Klein (the Feuerstein tradition). The new communication oriented research had in the 1980s provided the basis for a successful psychosocial intervention programme developed in Holland by a group of psychologists led by Maria Aarts. The programme was first called the ORION programme; today it is known as Marte Meo. At the same time Pnina Klein had developed and tried out her psychosocial intervention programme called the "More Intelligent, Sensitive Child"(MISC). It was therefore natural for us to organize seminars in Norway in order to introduce these new approaches to psychosocial intervention. The first seminar in Scandinavia where the ORION programme was presented by Maria Aarts and her team, was initiated by Henning and it was held at the Central Institute of Habilitation (Berg Gård) in the autumn of 1987. The first seminar about the MISC programme in Norway was initiated by Karsten and it took place at the University of Oslo, in the autumn of 1988. The inspiration from these events led to the arrangement of several training seminars and the implementation of these two programmes within the fields of education, as well as in psychosocial and clinical work with families in Norway.

Through our previous collaboration with UNICEF, and particularly our contact with Tarzie Varindra Vittachi, the Deputy Director of UNICEF, we

were invited to New York to present our first outline for a new psychosocial intervention programme. That outline was based on the main ideas incorporated in the programmes mentioned above and our own experiences with them, as well as the new research available at the time, in the field of child development. Our visit to New York opened doors for later collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and several seminars were subsequently held in Italy, India and Jamaica.

Further developments of what later became the ICDP, as we know it today, started in 1989. At the same time Karsten became professor of psychology at the University of Bergen, and Henning from 1990 held a position as professor and project director at the Centre of International Health, University of Bergen. Our collaboration in Bergen covered two important projects at the time. One was the implementation of the first version of the ICDP in several mother-child health centres in Bergen, where the eight guidelines for good interaction were first tested out. The other intervention project that we started at that time was set up in collaboration with the Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, and it was carried out in one of the slum areas of Addis Ababa. In Ethiopia we tried out a programme similar to the one we used in the health centres in Bergen, but with more emphasis on the elements central to the MISC programme, mentioned above. Professor Pnina Klein was involved as scientific consultant to this project. The project in Addis Ababa lasted for 12 years and a report was published as a book with the title: "Seeds of Hope. Twelve years of early intervention in Africa"; Unipub 2001.

Karsten was the project leader and had the main responsibility for the daily activities in the Bergen project, while Henning was project leader and had the main responsibility for running of the project in Ethiopia.



(Photo: Karsten and Wilbert) In the UK, Karsten was working closely with Wilbert Verheyen and Nicoletta Armstrong, in the Susila Dharma International organization, chaired by Wilbert at that time; together they organized ICDP seminars on the early version of the ICDP/MISC

programme, in the UK, Portugal, Romania, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

By 1992 we gained a lot of different experiences in the field of early psychosocial intervention under extremely varied conditions and we decided that we had sufficient practical experience and scientific theoretical basis to outline the first complete version of ICDP. An important event for the development of ICDP was the seminar held in Lisbon, in 1992, when the new version of ICDP was presented to WHO. WHO experts evaluated and validated the ICDP. The ICDP manual which was prepared by Karsten and Nicoletta, was later published as a WHO document called 'Improving Mother/Child Interaction to Promote Better Psychosocial Development in Children'.

In 1991 ICDP International was formed as an organization, establishing its first office in the UK and one year later it was formally registered as an official foundation in Norway. Registering the ICDP organization was a necessary step which facilitated formal collaboration with national as well as international authorities, in line with the demands of our work. In 1992 Karsten and Henning had established very important collaboration with a close friend and successful businessman, Amund Markus Hoff Berge, who became an important member of the ICDP team, taking responsibility for the administration, economy, and the formal aspects of running the ICDP Foundation, with support from the UK office.



From left to right: Nicoletta, Pedro, Karsten, Markus, Wilbert and Henning

The founding members of the ICDP Foundation were: Karsten Hundeide, Amund Markus Hoff Berge, Nicoletta Lailah Armstrong, Pnina Klein, Teresa

Irina Mendes, Pedro Icksan Mendes, Hermanus Fransiscus Verheyen, Luciana da Silva and Henning Rye. Karsten was chosen as chair, Henning as vice-chair, Nicoletta as secretary, Markus as treasurer – positions held for many years.

In 1993, NORAD financed a seminar held at the University of Oslo, with participants from several developing countries. This event also marked the



beginning of the project in Angola, in collaboration with the Methodist Church and the Norwegian Folk Aid. This project was later financed by NORAD and Karsten was in charge of it for seven years, working closely with Pedro and Teresa Mendes (photo: Teresa).

In 1994, Nicoletta started to develop ICDP in Colombia, training a local team and establishing cooperation with the FUNLAM University in Medellin. In 2001, she presented the ICDP at a UNICEF seminar in Bogotá and the representative Manuel Manrique saw the potential of ICDP in the context of violence prevention/peace building and promotion of children's rights. After a successful large scale pilot, designed by Nicoletta and sponsored by UNICEF, ICDP Colombia was registered and cooperation with UNICEF started in a more systematic way, which is ongoing.



(photo: Nicoletta) In 2004, Nicoletta prepared the "ICDP Mochila" as a set of ICDP materials, published by UNICEF in 2005, and these were used in large scale ICDP projects in collaboration with UNICEF in Colombia and El Salvador, with Plan in Guatemala and with Save the Children in Brazil. The UNICEF sponsored evaluation study of ICDP in Colombia showed positive outcomes, which were presented in 2010.

In 1995, ICDP established collaboration with the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs who decided to launch an early psychosocial intervention programme on a national scale in Norway. The Ministry focused on using the ICDP in maternal and child health centres and kindergartens. After two years of implementation in the southern counties, the implementation gradually slowed down due to the Ministry's inefficient planning of the implementation. Ten years later in 2007 the implementation

was successfully re-initiated. The new project is ongoing and it is based on a close collaboration between the Ministry and the local municipalities. The recent evaluation in 2011 of the impact of ICDP in Norway was very positive, as it is in the other countries where the effects of ICDP were evaluated.

The spreading of ICDP to Denmark and Sweden took place in the 1990s when Henning conducted training programs in Sæby in North Jylland and in Stockholm. Eventually the ICDP activities expanded very widely in these countries. ICDP training and implementation in Archangelsk, in the north-western part of Russia, was achieved through close collaboration between Karin Edenhammar in Stockholm, the Swedish 'Save the Children' and Henning. The collaboration with the North-West Medical University in Archangelsk led to a radical change in many institutions for children in this part of Russia, and also to a systematic and successful implementation of the programme later on.

The international project activities that brought ICDP to a great number of countries, mainly thanks to Karsten and Nicoletta, created a need for establishing a separate international 'division' called ICDP International. Since 2006, we have therefore ICDP International as separate from ICDP Norway, although both are located in the same office in Oslo. The original ICDP Foundation has today a clear international profile, whereas the ICDP national organizations look after the national needs and necessary local adjustments.

Over the last 20 years ICDP has spread to many countries in different parts of the world outside Scandinavia, to mention but some: Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Malawi, Tanzania, Lesotho, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Russia, Ukraine, Macedonia, India and Australia.

The available evaluations from Mozambique, Colombia, Sweden and Norway are very positive and clearly indicate that ICDP is "on the right track".

ICDP's basic values

The 1970s and 80s were decades when the modern understanding of children's psychosocial development – as mentioned previously – became generally known and accepted. Parallel to new approaches to psychosocial

intervention in children's development, value-based discussions regarding many children's living conditions and the possible impact of living conditions on their general development, were also taking place.

We were aware of the International Convention on Human Rights of 1945, a document often referred to in public debate. But what was often referred to, were the many paragraphs and their legal implications, whereas the ethical and moral content of those same paragraphs was seldom mentioned. The Human Rights paragraphs do not only contain legal guidelines, but also moral views regarding dignity as human beings and the right to live dignified lives. This we see as important aspects of the Human Rights seldom discussed. As an example we would like to mention Article I: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

If we think of children's situation in several countries in the world today, we know that many children, as well as adults, are far from experiencing freedom and rights as set out in the Convention on Human Rights.

If we look at the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, it is a document that was often discussed in the 1990s. The articles in the Convention are binding for every country that has signed the Convention and are integrated in the laws of the country. But equally, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is not simply a body of law. What makes the Convention on the Rights of the Child an important document is, above all, the moral content in each of the paragraphs and it is that moral content that makes the Convention such an important political tool.

It is beyond doubt that the articles in the Convention have had an important moral implication for our efforts to develop ICDP. We are not in this context going to discuss the Convention on the Rights of the Child much further. Interested readers are referred to the publications: 'Respect for the Child' by Karin Edenhammar in collaboration with the Swedish 'Save the Children', 2008; and 'Approach to Awareness-raising about Children's Rights and Preventing Violence, Child Abuse and Neglect' by Karsten and Nicoletta, published in the November 2011 issue of the American Journal 'Child Abuse and Neglect'.

Another important perspective underlying our intention to develop ICDP has been – and still is – the understanding gained from Humanistic Psychology of what it means to be a human being. Today there are probably not very

many active ICDP trainers who remember the controversies between the behaviouristic psychologists and the humanistic psychologists from the 1960s and the 70s. Today this fight has come to an end. The humanistic psychology was developed in the USA in 1950s and 60s as an important alternative to the behaviouristic psychology. Some of the central promoters were, among others, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow and Gordon Allport. The humanistic psychologists' main points of view could be summarized as follows: "Human development was seen as a dynamic process of development directed towards becoming who one in reality is". Carl Rogers's understanding of human development was inspired by the writings of the Danish philosopher Søren Kirkegaard amongst others. It may be of interest in this context to mention that Rogers and Maslow were both also inspired by a medical doctor, Kurt Goldstein, who treated brain damaged and traumatized soldiers from the first world war. He discovered that even these severely damaged soldiers had an inherent tendency to growth and development of their potential as human beings. These are human qualities we have also seen in many children, young people and adults in our work with clients. In children with severe disabilities these qualities were most often observed in those whose mothers never gave up hope for human development.

In the 1990s Henning compiled a number of statements from different international charters that emphasized some of the most important human values. Those values – the way they are formulated – may well serve as ideals that reflect human dreams and hopes for a better world, that were an important inspiration in our work with ICDP.

What are the values that characterize a good society? Here are some:

- Where humanity is perceived as a unity and all human beings are seen as equal.
- Where people live in peace with a feeling of community, under democratic leadership based on laws that secure justice, equality and respect for human dignity.
- Where science and religions are seen as complementary insights into the life of human beings.
- Where the world's resources are equally distributed and where extreme poverty does not exist.
- Where all have access to schooling and health services and where basic needs are met.
- Where equality between men and women is recognized and practised.
- Where humanity's creative potential can be fully realized.

The hope and wish that all children should grow up in an environment where care and upbringing could lead to a good life in accordance with basic values in their own culture, and thereby be best prepared for realizing their potential as youth and adults, has always been central in our effort to develop ICDP. Many have asked if we know what is special to ICDP that makes it acceptable to people from different cultures and walks of life. We think that one important reason is that it is simple and close to everyday experiences most people feel familiar with. The other – and it may be an even more important reason – is that the programme is based on a human understanding and on human values that most people recognize, feel happy with and wish for themselves and their children.
