

ICDP IN PARAGUAY - 2014

In the municipal market area of the capital Asunción, a children's Support Centre was set up in 2008 offering services to children and adolescents from the very poor families.

The Centre continues to work and all the staff has been receiving ICDP training on an ongoing basis.

The beneficiaries of the ICDP programme are caregivers-educators and the 130 children and adolescents in their care.

Once a month all the educators and volunteers participate in special exercises that are aimed at strengthening their practical application of the 8 guidelines of the ICDP programme in relation to the children in their care.



These activities are led by the centre director and ICDP trainer, Elizabeth Gavilan, who comments below:

In Paraguay the conventional style of leadership is authoritarianism inherited from long years of dictatorships and colonialism. It is expected that the boss will tell you exactly what to do.

This is in contrast to human relations the Centre is trying to develop, where the aim is respect for autonomy and democratic principles. It is a challenge for people from families with conventional values to develop their autonomy and understand their own responsibility, instead of falling into covert rebellion against the leader and the reigning hierarchical system in their society.

The constant challenge is the low understanding of adults in general, and including parents, about the true emotional and psychosocial needs of babies and children of all ages.

Because they are not receiving proper care and positive regulation many teenagers are not able to set goals or have enough discipline to achieve them. They are often unable to refuse when they are offered drugs."

The Centre has been successful in its work with children and young people. Children manage to carry on studying. Girls who attend the Centre do not become pregnant.

School attendance is compulsory but attending the Centre is not. Children and adolescents feel comfortable at the Centre and are happy to open up and talk about their experiences, sometimes revealing personal secrets to their educators.

About ten young people have been attending the Centre for over 10 years now, since their early childhood. Two teenage boys decided to study psychology in order to later on come back and work at the Support Centre and thus give back what they have received from the centre.