

ICDP trainees at SOS Romania, 2015

“International Child Development Programme – strategy to prevent inequalities, social and family violence” (International Child Development Programme - strategie de prevenire a inegalitatilor, violenteisocialesifamiliale) is the name of the project developing in Bacau, 300 km north of Bucarest, Romania.

An ICDP visit to Bacau took place between the 16th and 21st of March 2015, with the purpose of starting to train a group of 5 professionals to become ICDP Trainers. These professionals were selected from a larger group who were trained in 2014 as ICDP facilitators.

Based on the report by international trainer Pedro Mendes:

The first part of the workshop in Bacau included trainees’ presentations of their own fieldwork with analysis and discussion afterwards.

The second part looked at the use of the ICDP programme in different settings, the sensitization principles and qualities required to improve the children’s human environment, the monitoring and assessment tools and the test questions required to become a trainer.

The first session started with a brief review of key points of the ICDP programme. Special focus was placed on the more complex guidelines, such as giving meaning and how to regulate behaviour, and discussing examples based on trainees’ own fieldwork experience did this.

Each trainee was then asked to go through a colleague-facilitator's fieldwork report. They discussed weaker points or that which could be improved. This proved to be an interesting exercise because it brought up some important issues to light. It revealed the need to be more precise and comprehensive when writing reports, as a report could become useful basis for further intervention work. In this exercise the trainees compared their findings with their own field reports, which was enriching.

Discussion about lessons learned from the field showed that the 5 trainees shared some common difficulties, such as mobilizing and gathering caregivers. On the other hand, they realized that there was a need to be flexible, to take caregivers background into account, as well as local cultural beliefs, e.g., the belief that children should be kissed only after they are asleep.

Work with videos:

Some videos of the trainees' fieldwork were watched and analysed. The trainees showed to be very sensitive in their approaches to caregivers. The viewing and analysing of the field work videos helped to clarify the difference between 'giving meaning' and 'expanding on

the meaning' reinforcing the role of expansion as a key to children's symbolic and abstract reasoning, critical for learning maths. Clearly, there is always a certain degree of subjectivity about scoring a filmed adult-child interaction for it often involves personal feelings, concepts and judgements. As expected scoring of observed interactions on the five point Likert scale led to discussions, but it is interesting to note that the differences in individual scoring were narrower than before (i.e. at the previous workshop), meaning that their perception had become more accurate.



Field visit:

The 5 trainees went together with Pedro Mendes to visit the day care centre in the SOS village. The purpose of the visit was to observe and make an assessment of interactions with children in a real context.

This was a very interesting exercise and the children were very much at ease with trainees. The exercise demonstrated different styles of interacting with children by trainees.

Back in the meeting room these interactions were analysed and scored and again there were only minimal differences of opinion among trainees. During the visit the trainees displayed good potential as ICDP trainers and it became clear that they all really loved children and cared about their wellbeing.

The importance of establishing a good contract of trust and how to use a personalised style with caregivers (ICDP sensitization principles 1 and 7) were discussed in great depth at the workshop.

The use of empathy as the key to being able to modify caregivers' misconceptions was talked about as an important area of the ICDP work. Keeping a notebook with practical examples was also mentioned as important.

The meeting stressed how networking can contribute to overcome difficult or critical situations by working together.

ICDP and formal education was a topic that led to a more serious debate on how to implement the ICDP programme in school context when both the teachers and the administration are rigid and reluctant to make changes. It became clear that unless there is a will to make changes from the top it is practically impossible to make a real difference and to improve things in a school, particularly when it comes to exclusion and stigmatisation.

Particular attention was also given to monitoring and assessment tools and the need to use them as a means to collect data to demonstrate the impact and efficacy of the programme and the quality of the work accomplished.

Over the next few months, the trainees who participated in the workshop are requested to carry out another fieldwork as a condition to be certified as Trainers in the ICDP Programme.

First group of trainers in Bacau

On May the 12th, SOS Children's Villages Romania celebrated the end of the training programme, which culminated in the graduation of its first group of ICDP trainers.



ICDP issued Trainer level diplomas to Rodica Marinoiu, Mihaela Tabara, Andreea Petcu, Alina Vleanga and Marinela Pascu. The SOS organization now has all the necessary expertise to apply the ICDP method in their work with vulnerable families and foster parents. They can also begin to train other professionals as ICDP facilitators.

The ICDP method has already been promoted inside the SOS organization and there will be sessions for parents on regular basis each year.

They also intend to train teachers and other specialists from the neighbouring communities.

In fact, they have already received a request from a local school to facilitate the ICDP programme in their institution - this training project will start before the end of May.

SOS is also planning to promote the ICDP programme at the IPSCAN conference, where Rodica Marinoiu, ICDP trainer, will be presenting the results of their work in using the ICDP method with vulnerable parents from rural communities in Bacau.

“We are very proud of our ICDP achievements. Through this project we have become more visible in the community and because of that we have a few proposals for partnership regarding the ICDP method. We are very glad that many specialists from the social field are showing interest to learn the ICDP method. We plan to provide them with ICDP theoretical and practical information and training in order to improve their relation with children and parents. SOS is signing new partnerships with schools and day care centers, where the training in ICDP will be given free of charge. We will be monitoring the training through face-to-face meetings between the participants and the ICDP trainer from SOS. The number of facilitators will gradually be increased in the future. SOS will continue to use the ICDP method in the future and we will monitor very closely its impact on parents - and based on these results we will prepare a new application to expand the use of the ICDP programme to more regions in Romania. This expansion will take place through our partnership with the National Authority for the Protection of Children’s Rights and the Ministry of Education.”

– Nikoleta Preda, National Programme Development Director and Adriana Birloi, Programme Development Expert, SOS Children’s Villages Romania.