



## **Botswana 2018 ICDP brief update**

This year 21 of the 36-trained facilitators in 2017 conducted more parents' groups meetings around Thamaga village, Botswana. The 21 facilitators managed to reach out to a total of 100 parents taking part in group discussions on weekly basis for a period of 12 weeks. Participants of ICDP were a combination of couples, youth, elderly people, pastors and traditional leadership. It is worth noting that we saw an increase in number of males taking part in the 2018 ICDP program. Some facilitators have had to drop out of the program due to moving location, job change/transfer, pressure of other responsibilities including the urgent need to tend to farm lands. The majority however continued running the parent's groups.

Ark and Mark Trust social work team this time around did not participate fully in weekly parents' meetings. They took the supervisory role by meeting all the facilitators on a monthly basis to get updates and provided guidance. The purpose was to instil independence and program ownership by the community and build commitment for facilitators. This relieved the coordinating team (Ark and Mark) from dependency issues and gave adequate opportunity for evaluation of the passion and commitment the facilitators have. One example of this was that facilitators who missed scheduled update meetings sent in their updates via WhatsApp, voice recording and were guided accordingly.

The ICDP weekly group discussions engaged parents in a series of dialogues where they discuss Psycho-social and emotional needs of children through key ICDP themes. These themes then guide parents on practical hands on observation, experimentation for self-monitoring and self-evaluation. This helps many parents test out and adopt different and more positive ways of relating to children. The ICDP approach is based on the idea that the best way to help children is by equipping parents and caregivers with good parenting skills. Help in ICDP principles is understood in terms of building up competence and supporting the existing child caring network systems in the community. The program respects culture and operates within the cultural framework. This makes it easy to adapt to the Botswana traditional communities.

To conclude the parent's meetings, we held a grant graduation on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2018 for the 100 second cohort of parents who took part in the program. The celebration marked the conclusion of the parents group meetings which were held on weekly basis for a period of 3 months. The 100 parents who graduated from the parenting program reached out to a total

of 681 people in Thamaga Village. This number was reached by parents as they shared the ICDP program with their children, relatives and friends. This has expanded the impact of the program in the village. The graduation ceremony which was held at Independent Assemblies of God (church venue) attracted around 150 people witnessing the success of ICDP in Thamaga Village.

The ceremony was embraced by different key local community leadership and stakeholders namely; Dikgosi (Chiefs/headmen), Station commander, District Commissioner, Office of the Parliament, School heads, Pastors and Child Protection Committee representatives.

Moreover, there were some testimonies from graduates and the following are some of the quotes captured:

1. "ICDP has taken us from Egypt to Canan" the person was using this as a metaphor meaning that ICDP have moved them from slavery to freedom, from negative parenting to a joyful experience of parenting.
2. "ICDP brings unity, peace and joy to families "the home tasks that we were given during our group meetings have brought us closer to our children".
3. "I used to have no accomodation now my child has built me a tiled house with modern amentities. My relationship with him motivated him to complete it"
4. "ICDP has taught us how to raise a child."
5. "Our childrens feelings towards us have become more positive than before."
6. "We are now confident in our role as parents/caregivers and understand the importance of our role in our childrens lifes."
7. "Crime rate has declined, Thamga Village is now at 23% on youth risky behaviours and Molepolole(the neihbouring village) is at 53%. This is great achievement; In 2017 youth crime was as high as 60% and 70% respectively". Quoted from station commander's speech".

The day was concluded by certificates awards to graduates(parents) as a symbol of successful completion of the 12 weekly group meetings. This marked the closure of the 2018 ICDP program.

Program Sustainability initiatives

#### **Venue Challenges**

- ✓ Lack of venues to conduct meetings were some challenges experienced in continuation of program. To address this, facilitators pledged to use their homes.

#### **Incentives to retain participants and encourage attendants to be committed**

- ✓ Facilitators contribute small fees out of their monthly allowance and provide snacks to parents. In Botswana the culture of sharing a meal, even if it's a small

snack, symbolises a token of appreciation which encourage people to continue being supportive.

### **Way forward**

- ✓ To have second training of ICDP facilitators around March 2018.
- ✓ To train a variety of stakeholders from diverse backgrounds including kindergarden, members from parent teachers association (PTA), dikgosana ( chiefs & headmen), Police department.

Report by

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