



**International Child
Development Programme**

ICDP NEWSLETTER

October 2021





Dear colleagues and supporters,

ICDP international team is delighted to share with you our latest issue of the ICDP Newsletter, in which we hope you will find interesting information from ICDP colleagues worldwide.

We bring you updates from our partners that were sent to us in the period between April 2021 and October 2021.

We also wish to draw your attention to two studies of interest, which are included in this Newsletter – the studies can also be found on our webpage by following these links:

[New research on autism - ICDP](#)

[Smacking Children makes their behaviour worse, scientist find - ICDP](#)

With warm wishes,

Nicoletta, Karl-Peter, Ane-Marthe, Guillermo, Tatiana, Columbus, Santana and Camilla



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ICDP break-through in German day-cares

Update about ICDP work by Rita Crecelius, ICDP trainer:

During 2021, ICDP became known to more day-cares in Germany.

- In June, 18 members of the day-care team responsible for 88 children at the St. Thomas day-care, completed their ICDP caregiver training. They were proud to be the first day-care team in Germany to hold an ICDP certificate.

According to their leader Ana Vázquez-Zimmermann all team members reported that ICDP has been continuously enriching their everyday life. Some noticed that the crib familiarization was much more relaxed this year. Most colleagues think that the “view of the child” has become more natural and that they themselves no longer come under so much pressure in certain challenging situations.

Ana said: “We were also able to advance team development with the help of the ICDP guidelines. ICDP should be our second bible!”

- In November 2021, I will conduct the first refresher course for the team at the St. Thomas day-care. The day-care belongs to “Kirchenkreis Hildesheim-Sarstedt”. This company is a provider of 22 day-cares in total and their interest in ICDP is growing there.
- In May 2021, Impuls Soziales Management, provider of 40 day-cares all over Germany, started an ICDP pilot project in their “Kinderhaus Frech Daxe” day-care. This day-care has 50 team members in charge of 176 children, whose parents are working at VW Financial Services in Braunschweig. Two out of five groups of their day-care workers have already received their caregiver ICDP certificates. The pilot will be completed in January 2022. The feedback has so far been very positive. One of the day-care workers said: “It is incredible, how quickly and effortlessly are things changing for the better thanks to ICDP”.
- In September 2021, I presented ICDP at a school for children with special needs and as a result, we are now planning a trial ICDP workshop for teachers.
- I have previously conducted an ICDP course for caregivers of older people, which aroused a lot of interest in ICDP. This year I plan to hold another such course in November 2021, in Hameln – there have been quite a few registrations for it.
- I was also approached to give a presentation about ICDP by a team from the Caritas Forum Demenz organization. They are specialists in geriatric psychiatry and organize training for carers of older people and people with dementia, in the Region of Hannover.
- Bunte Gruppe is a free, non-institutional body providing training for carers from different fields. In July 2021, I completed the training of 6 carers, Bunte Gruppe 3. I have also been training Bunte Gruppe 4, consisting of 7 carers, including two from Austria – their training

will be completed in November 2021. This is my first ICDP hybrid-training: Four of the participants attend the workshop in person, whereas the other three are online and appear on the screen – so this is my first ICDP “hybrid training”. The whole group is interacting well, participants are building bridges between the virtual and the real world – this is an interesting experience in itself!

The technical equipment for this kind of “hybrid workshops” is facilitated by a network of creative professionals called KreHtiv, in the region of Hannover. In spring 2021, they started a “Fond for Digitization” to which I applied; I was successful and received a financial contribution thanks to which I was able to establish ICDP online events in a professional way. This has enabled me to reach more participants – thank you KreHtiv!



Throughout 2021, I discovered that day-care workers in my country welcome ICDP and are eager to work with the relational approach.

Therefore, my plan for 2022, is to train key persons in day-cares as ICDP coaches. Their task will be to support colleagues and teams, so that they keep on expanding the ICDP approach in their daily routines.

My goal is to anchor the relational perspective in a sustainable way in the work of professional caregivers. In this way, we can develop resilience in both children and their caregivers – resilience being a key factor in times of uncertainty and social change.

An expert of the World Health Organization said: “ICDP is food for a healthy brain”. This food was tasted by quite a large number of children’s caregivers in Germany during the course of the year – and it seems they wish it to become their regular diet.



ICDP at INPHRU, Nicaragua

Aura Estella Mendoza, the ICDP representative at the INPRHU organization in Ocotal, Nicaragua explains:

ICDP has been institutionalized in several programmes run by INPHRU, such as social communication, family intervention and also in their work with teachers. This means that the ICDP programme is used to sensitize families, teachers and it is used directly with children. All ICDP work is documented. During 2021, an additional focus has been on organizing ICDP workshops in order to train new staff.

Due to COVID-19, the ICDP team at INPRHU had to change their working hours and were forced to reduce their coverage, as a result of which they attended less adults and children in their projects than originally planned. During the time that meeting in person was not permitted, they used the radio to communicate content of ICDP messages. This situation changed by mid-March 2021, when all went back to normal.



A new asset for ICDP

On the 14th of April 2021, the ICDP foundation issued a Facilitator diploma to Dahliani Anne Drejza. Dahliani lives in Oslo but she carried out in her native French both her practical project with families and her written report about it.

“Dahliani is trained as a Montessori teacher; she is naturally empathic and warm towards children, as well as with adults. Over the years she has shown interest in the ICDP programme and has been following closely the gradual ICDP developments worldwide. Some of our ICDP board members and founders had the pleasure of enjoying delicious cakes she prepared for us each time we had a meeting in Oslo. Due to her busy life with little free time, her intention to become involved in ICDP remained unfulfilled until recently. I am very glad that she has recently become an ICDP facilitator. We don't have many facilitators who can deliver ICDP in French. I enjoyed working with Dhaliani in person before the pandemic, when she participated in the training I conducted in England. During my recent online meeting with her, we discussed her ICDP work with parents. She will be an asset for ICDP, thanks to her background experience, sensitivity and ability to communicate it to others.” – Nicoletta Armstrong, ICDP.

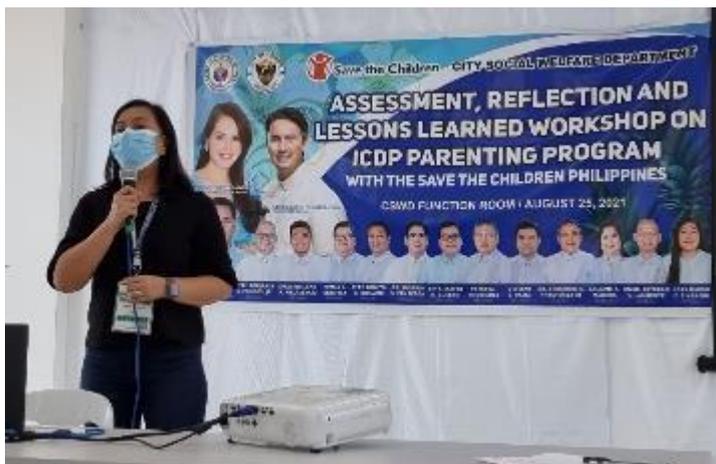


Growth in the Philippines

Update from Zenona Gread, ICDP trainer and coordinator from Save the Children's office in Ormoc city, Philippines, where the ICDP programme is a key component of the Child Sensitive Social Protection (CSSP) programme:

In May 2021, a total of 2,008 (1,404 females; 604 males) parents from nine barangays of Villaba (Hinabuyan and Sambulawan), Kananga (Lonoy, Naghalin, Natubgan and Poblacion) and Ormoc City (San Jose, Can-untog and Dunghol) graduated from the parenting programme. Among the 27 children and youth who gave testimonies during the graduation ceremony, was the 16 years old Jobert Lebolora from Sambulawan, Villaba, who shared the following:

“I see a big behaviour change in my mother because of the parenting programme. She used to nag and shout when giving orders and she easily flared up when we asked her something. But I noticed that during the course of the parenting sessions, she has slowly softened. She doesn't nag nor does she shout anymore. Our family has become peaceful. My mother and father don't fight or shout at each other anymore. So, we children help do the household chores without having to be told.”



The qualitative study by an external consultant of the impact on fathers and children of the specially adapted parenting course for fathers, also revealed positive changes of behaviour.

Fathers said that the parenting sessions showed them how to show love and affection to both boys and girls, which they thought was only done by rich families. It made them realize that expressions of love and affection are for all and can be done

by mothers and fathers. Here's a personal account of one of the participant fathers:

“I used to come home from the fields tired and irritable, I even hit the children with a broom, pinched their ears and yelled at them for slightest causes. I didn't notice their joy upon seeing me come home. They used to meet me and ask if I brought any frogs from the paddies; and when I didn't, they would get so disappointed, ignoring me, finding any excuse not to do anything I ask of them. After participating in the parenting sessions, I realized I needed to reciprocate their eagerness and happiness on seeing me; and I realized later that that the frogs made them happy, that they liked playing with them, before we cooked them for dinner. Now I make sure to catch some frogs before coming home...”

The participant mothers expressed that they were not just witnesses to the shift in their husbands' behaviour, but saw themselves as being part of that change. The positive change of their husbands' behaviour was also an effect of their own change of behaviour through the parenting sessions they too attended.



A total of 64 Family Support Groups (FSGs) were formed as a sustainability and support mechanism of the parenting programme. FSGs served as the venue for the parents/caregivers to review the parenting topics and continue their savings scheme, “Ang Pangarap kong Proyekto (My dreamed project”) through monthly meetings. FSG savings is a significant facilitating factor for children’s continued education amidst the pandemic. Most FSG savings were used for children’s school needs (Wi-Fi and mobile

phones for online classes). A number of FSG members earmarked their savings for house repairs, medical needs of family members, house construction, washing machine, refrigerator, electricity installation, and livelihood capitalization for passenger tricycles, meat vending, hog raising and emergency purposes which also impact on the well-being of the whole family.

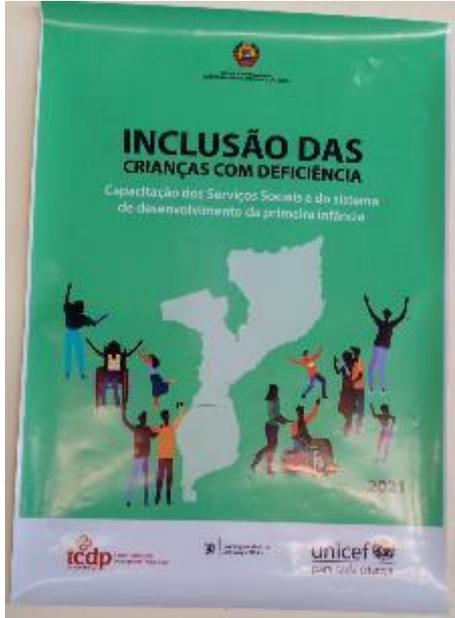
Another significant result of the project is that the parenting facilitators organized themselves into a formal cooperative whose aim is to carry on regular updates and reviews of the parenting topics, as well as managing their savings.

Other accomplishments:

- Adoption of the ICDP parenting programme by Ormoc City Social Welfare Office as an implementation strategy of the “Ormoc City Children’s Welfare Code” for the 110 barangays of the city.
- During the period between March and July 2021, the roll out of the ICDP parenting programme took place in Ormoc Barangays for a total of 135 parent participants (123 females; 12males)
- Adoption of the ICDP parenting programme by DSWD – Region 8 as a social case management strategy of the Kilos Unlad (KU) framework 1 in implementation of the 4Ps law or RA 11310, for the whole region per agreement with 4Ps Regional Programme Management Office. Video documentation of the decision by the 4Ps Division Chief was sent to SC Finland.
- In March 2021, ICDP Facilitator level training was given to 20 (15 females; 2 males) Provincial Links and Social Welfare Officers of DSWD – Region 8 Implementation
- ICDP parenting programme graduation of 2008 (1,404 females; 604 males) 4Ps parent participants took place in May 2021.
- ICDP Facilitator level training was given to 150 (130 females; 20 males) officers of the Provincial Links of 4Ps Region 8, as preparatory activities for Year 2022 KU framework implementation of the 4Ps.
- Evaluations and reflections were carried out of the ICDP parenting programme roll out by the Ormoc City Social Welfare and Development facilitators

¹ **Kilos-Unlad Framework**, it is a 7-year modular social case management strategy that aims to guide the 4Ps households to achieve an improved well-being.

ICDP Mozambique



For almost two years now, ICDP Mozambique has been giving technical assistance to social workers involved in The Child Grant (0-2 years) programme, which is an unconditional cash transfer programme targeting children living in poor or vulnerable households with the objective of reducing poverty, improving child wellbeing and promoting access to social services.

In 2021, the ICDP team from ICDP has been offering ICDP training to the staff from social services who are involved in programmes related to early childhood, with special focus on the inclusion of children with disabilities. The project represents cooperation of ICDP Mozambique with UNICEF and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

New facilitators in Moldova

The Centre of Early Intervention (CEI) Services Voinicel (<https://voinicel.md/>) was founded in Chisinau, Moldova, with the help of the Norwegian non-governmental organisation Ahead-Moldova in 2003. The need for family-based intervention was identified in order to address the high rate of abandoned children with disabilities in four orphanages, resulting from a lack of services for families with children at risk of developmental disorders, as well as those with identified disabilities. The ICDP programme was introduced in 2012 and it has been used on an ongoing basis since then. Marina Kalak (pediatrician), Ala Bendrerchi (speech therapist) and Mariana Jalba (child neurologist) apply ICDP through their work with parents and children at the Centre. Sylvia Briabin (psychologist) moved in 2018 to Romania.

“In 2021 we continued to train a group to become ICDP facilitators; participants came from different districts. We had to reorganize the mode of training to do it in an online format. It was quite challenging but we did it! Furthermore, we succeeded to do it interactively and to make it “lively”. One of the adaptations included extending the second module to make sure all the participants internalized the ICDP ideas. Due to pandemic not all participants had possibility to organize meetings with group of parents, however, they managed to perform the necessary number of meetings, either in group or individually. As a result, we now have 12 new ICDP facilitators in different districts and most of them work with less able children.



We continue to implement ICDP through our own work at the Voinicel Center as well. This programme became extremely important in these very difficult times. We hope to extend our training activities to Transnistria region next year (2022), provided our project application is successful. Despite the pandemic and its many challenges, we had a new great experience in implementing ICDP in Moldova”. – Marina Jalba.



Activities in Botswana

The Ark and Mark Trust <https://www.arkandmark.org/>, has been developing ICDP since 2017.

In May 2021, ICDP training of future trainers was started through a virtual meeting with Patrick O'Loughlin and Chiku Ali Mkalu. At this meeting the future trainers were instructed and made ready for their practical work which started after the meeting. Their practical work consists of forming a new group of 50 facilitators, including 40 people from Ramotswa and 10 from Thamaga.

THAMAGA:

The Implementation of ICDP in Thamaga was resumed in April 2021, with the support of the village leadership and the Social Welfare office. Ark and Mark Trust mobilized 26 facilitators. The challenge was that some of the facilitators relocated for various reasons and others, especially teachers from secondary schools were not available as they were fully engaged at their schools due to COVID-19. The 26 facilitators have managed to reach out to 110 caregivers and 364 children.



GABORONE:

Ark and Mark Trust have initiated the implementation of ICDP at one of Botswana Defence Force (BDF) camps.

These camps are a community within the greater community of Gaborone and face unique difficulties because members of the force often leave their families for long periods of time – as a result of which, the army families face significant challenges.

The ICDP programme was introduced as a possible solution.

The reception by the Social Welfare office has been very positive. They see ICDP as a programme that can add value to the families and children at BDF. The participants are happy with the ICDP course and are always ready to do their home tasks and bring their feedback to the next ICDP session. There are noted improvement in their homes regarding their family interaction.

The biggest challenge is with regard the time schedules to run the parent groups due to the imposed quarantines. This contributes to a delay in the completion of the programme as the facilitators are often having to reschedule the ICDP sessions. Four ICDP facilitators are running sessions at BDF for 24 participants, at a ratio of 1:6 due to the pandemic. The Ark and Mark Trust provided voice recorders to facilitators to enable them to capture the content of sessions for entry into their log books – this was necessary because only one facilitator is running ICDP sessions, whereas usually they work in pairs.



Stories from ICDP China

ICDP China has collected stories from caregivers who received ICDP training – [click here to read them.](#)

Here is a story from Yang Yang:

“Before learning ICDP, as a mother of two children, I didn’t know how to prevent the children from fighting, nor how to teach them to put away their toys and do the housework they had agreed to do. Every morning it was so painful, because without constant reminders and fights it seemed that they would not be able to leave the house in time for school. After school, they had homework, house chores and the inevitable quarrelling.

Before I learned ICDP, my “tips and tricks” included threats, yelling, and hitting. I did not like this method, and neither did the children. And this method did not work! I threatened, yelled, and hit them repeatedly for the same unruly behaviour. I constantly found myself yelling at the children: “I have said it a hundred times, put away your toys! Hurry up and do your homework!”

I was so frustrated, because I could see that my method did not work...Through studying (ICDP), I discovered that these problems are not my children’s problems, but my problems! Now I use what I have learned from ICDP about raising my children.

I try to let them do their homework independently and provide encouragement. I patiently ask the child what happened at school and how they are doing, trying to start an intimate conversation. When I leave the house, I treat the children as independent people, let them do homework by themselves, and let my son help his sister with her homework if she needs assistance. When I am cooking, if my daughter wants to join in cutting vegetables, I try follow her initiative and give her a small knife to help me cut the potatoes. I also provide explanations for the many strange questions my son asks me. When my child helps me move flowers and plants, we pay attention to the formation of a leaf... Just like chairman Wu said: “In fact, ICDP is everywhere in life”, it is just that I have lacked patience and understanding for my children!

After studying, I discovered that my children have a lot of good sides, but before I only wanted them to do things my way. I did not empathize with my children!

Now I am slowly changing. After changing myself, the children will change, and the situation at home will also change! I will continually be using what I have learned!”.

ICDP in Herat restarting

The International Assistance Mission (IAM) is a non-profit Christian development non-governmental organization working in Afghanistan since 1966. The ICDP programme was introduced to IAM in 2019, by training a small team of health professionals as ICDP facilitators over the course of that year. The newly trained facilitators started to run ICDP courses with some members of their health teams, but after several months the training had to be stopped due to COVID-19.

After a one-year break caused by the pandemic, the training was resumed in June 2021. It was organized and conducted by Fattah Najm for participants comprised of mental health professionals working at IAM, in the town of Herat.

Here are pictures of some of the ICDP materials that were prepared for the training:





Introduction of ICDP at a nursery in Japan

The ICDP programme was introduced in the Higashi Mikata Hoikuen nursery school. The nursery is located in the Hamamatsu (浜松市, Hamamatsu-shi) city in western Shizuoka Prefecture. Link to the nursery website: [ひがしみかた保育園 \(h-mikata.com\)](http://h-mikata.com).



Hitoshi Maeshima, ICDP trainer and doctor by profession, shared his story about this new ICDP endeavour:

This year (2021), I was contacted by a nursery school director who asked me to become their school doctor. The school in question is the Higashi Mikdat Hoikuen nursery, which opened in April 2021. It can accommodate 120 children and 27 nursery teachers. Several months later, around the 10th of June, the director, the secretary and a nursery teacher visited my clinic and we agreed that I should become their official doctor. I used this opportunity to talk about ICDP; I explained that I went to England three times to participate in ICDP training workshops and afterwards I started to apply the ICDP programme in Japan. During the ten years of using the ICDP programme I discovered how by following the simple ICDP guidelines the relationship between caregivers and their children can be improved, promoting a balanced development of

the child's emotions and intellect. The director has many years of experience in childcare and immediately expressed interest in the programme and showed her appreciation and understanding about the importance of the ICDP guidelines in childcare. She confirmed that she would like to apply the ICDP programme in practice in the nursery and also with the nursery teachers. I agreed to help introduce the programme and we made plans for the training. My first visit to the nursery took place on 14th of July 2021 – during this visit I started the training of the nursery teachers (on photo above).

ICDP plans for Serdaja and Tashkent

The Happy Start preschool has extended its work from Tashkent to Serdaja, a town about an hour and a half from Tashkent, in Uzbekistan. The new preschool is called Happy Start 3 and the ICDP programme will be integrated as part of the work of its teachers, whereas the children's parents will also be offered a course in ICDP later in 2021.



In June 2021, two ICDP facilitators, Valentina Tan and Mardalena Brannstrom (on photo above) visited the Serdaja Happy Start 3 preschool in order to attend the end of year celebration for the 6- and 7-year-old pupils. They had prepared a special programme for the children, but in addition they also conducted a session about empathy for children's parents, based the ICDP programme. The group explored how they show empathy to their children.

“It was really nice and the parents liked it. We had lots of parents sharing their experiences and showing interest to participate in the training. We showed some videos of positive interaction which we had made at the Happy Start preschool in Tashkent, where we already trained in ICDP a group of preschool teachers. One of the fathers said that when we start rolling out the ICDP programme for parents in the autumn of this year, he will join and participate in the training.” – says Magdalena.



Photo above is of one of the participant mothers with her two children.

It will be a busy time ahead for the ICDP facilitators, Magdalena and Valentina. They plan to train parents as well as teachers at Happy Start and in addition, they are preparing a leaflet and a promotional video about the ICDP programme directed at preschool teachers in general. They plan to visit different schools in order to inform them about ICDP and to offer to run a training programme at their school.

Stories from Nepal

Bishwa Pun, ICDP trainer at Save the Children Nepal shared the following news:

Parenting comes with its fair share of joys and challenges. Navigating parenting during COVID-19 has become even more challenging as parents and children spend an unprecedented amount

of time together at home. Most of us have experienced this for ourselves. SC has been collaborating with Stories of Nepal (<https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal>) to bring stories of parents who have adopted gentler and affirmative parenting techniques inspired by the ICDP programme.



These stories talk about parents taking care of children with love, providing enriching interactions, and establishing limits in a positive way, thus supporting children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development. The Child Sensitive Social Protection Programme developed by Save the Children provides technical support to local governments to run parenting programmes for parents and caregivers of the Child Grant beneficiaries. The Child Grant is the Nepal government's cash transfer programme aiming to reduce malnutrition of children aged below 5 years; the ICDP programme is delivered as

part of this initiative.

Stories and Photos Submitted:

https://savethechildren1my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/ganga_pyakurel_savethechildren_org/EunRp3dN0ahIk6VrZnlTo1AB5D03QikyZFoQgOo6x4VhMQ?e=NNedYF

Links to the Posts:

- Post 1: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4091886824243105>
- Post 2: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4093493094082478>
- Post 3: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4096419207123200>
- Post 4: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4099293550169099>
- Post 5: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4103755086389612>
- Post 6: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4108193439279110>
- Post 7: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4112707178827736>
- Post 8: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4116046005160520>
- Post 9: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4127588670672920>
- Post 10: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4130774360354351>
- Post 11: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4134016326696821>
- Post 12: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4140016072763513>
- Post 13: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4148408075257646>

Post 14: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4154918561273264>

Post 15: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4169592756472511>

Post 16: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4172494799515640>

Post 17: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4178329352265518>

Post 18: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4181841021914351>

Post 19: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4185264614905325>

Post 20: <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoriesOfNepal/posts/4187842624647524>

Report from Dhaka

In July 2021, a meeting of the ICDP Bangladesh core team took place, which examined the ICDP developments in the country. ICDP trainer and project co-coordinator Sajeda Bobby Akter presented a report.

ICDP is expanding in the country in partnership with four major partners, namely LAMB, Friends of Basha, Salvation Army and Normisjon. The ICDP project has established an ICDP support group comprised of the country coordinator, expat volunteer, expat consultant and ICDP staff. Normisjon's director and finance officer are also members of this group. This group meets online for the purpose of supervision of project activities.

In addition to ICDP facilitators, ICDP in Bangladesh has two trainers and several trainee trainers. ICDP trainer Gerd Eli Haaland and Sajeda Bobby Akter have together spearheaded most of the ICDP developments in the country. Eli returned to Norway in summer 2021, but has continued to support the ICDP team via Zoom; she also plans to offer support in person during her visit to Bangladesh which is planned for November 2021. The project counts on the support from two other ICDP consultants as well as the ICDP chair.

During the first half of 2021, a number of planned trainings and follow-up programmes had to be cancelled due to the continuous threat from COVID-19.

A Baseline Survey was conducted with 10 facilitators, 15 children and 15 mothers from LAMB English Medium school and SIM Bangladesh project.

One Facilitator level training was completed with seven participants from LAMB. Two more trainings were completed by the end of August for the participants from the Dhaka and Dinajpur region. In addition, two persons are receiving training so that they can start to train Normisjon project partners.



A total of 48 facilitations and 43 online meetings were managed during the pandemic crisis. Supervision and monitoring had to be mostly conducted online. The ICDP team hopes to complete all their planned targets.

The ICDP future implementation will involve five organizations in the first year (2022) and seven in the second year (2023). Each partner organization will nominate one person to represent them in the core team. An online training course to form new trainers is planned for ten facilitators from Normisjon, Lamb and SIM, so that by the end of June 2022, there will be seven ICDP certified trainers in Bangladesh.

The translation of a book about scientific research behind ICDP was finished and proof reading is in process.

Plans for Brazil



In the second half of 2021, Nicoletta Armstrong was contacted by Rosilene Thilesen, an ICDP facilitator, and together have started to make plans on developing a new initiative for Brazil. Rosilene is enthusiastic, inspired and determined to introduce the ICDP programme to social workers and families in Sao Paulo, in her native Brazil, where she has both family and good connections.

Rosilene Thilesen is currently receiving ICDP training online from Nicoletta Armstrong to become an ICDP certified trainer. She is also in contact with Polyanna Magalhães, the representative for ICDP in Brazil who will be providing background support to Rosilene's work in the future.

“It is an opportune time to start ICDP in Sao Paulo, as it is a period of great need due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many families require support, and most of all they need a sensitive approach and warm emotional support, which ICDP can provide so well. I

am very excited to be working towards this goal and look forward to the first phase of the project.” – says Rosilene.

The new ICDP training project in Sao Paolo will start in January 2022. The training will be provided for the local network of social workers linked to the Evangelical church Prova Viva and its pastor Bianca Toledo. The second phase of the project will be working on introducing the ICDP programme to Rio de Janeiro, in the second half of 2022.

Pilot project in Ghana

From June 2021 onwards, a group of professionals who have been cooperating with ICDP Ghana for some time, have started to receive training to become ICDP facilitators. After the first workshop in June and as part of their training the trainees have been carrying out pilot projects, by implementing the ICDP programme with twenty parents divided in 3 groups.



Report describing progress of this work:

[Report by ICDP Ghana](#)



Training in Boyacá, Colombia

In August 2021, ICDP trainer Luis Fernando Lopez started to conduct both virtual and face-to-face trainings with 3 different groups of professionals working for the Health Secretariat. The purpose of the training is to strengthen and follow up facilitators who have been delivering the ICDP programme to families in the 123 municipalities of the department. The roll out of the ICDP programme is supported by Martin Barrera, the Secretary of Health. Most of the participants of the recent trainings are psychologists.

Background: Since 2004, ICDP has been present in the Department of Boyacá, Colombia, where the ICDP programme was initially implemented as part of a wider peace promoting strategy by UNICEF. When the Governor of the Boyacá department launched the project, he said that ICDP represented an important contribution towards the future development of the Colombian society and that ICDP was officially adopted as a long-term strategy. In 2008, the Colombian national award for human rights was given to the Boyacá department for their work with ICDP, the programme had at that time reached 50 000 families.

One of the outstanding ICDP facilitators currently applying the ICDP programme with the indigenous community UWA, located in the area of Guican, in the department of Boyacá, is Angie Morales. See photos below from her work:





ICDP pedagogical days in Medellin



Juliana Zapata Romero
Profesional Universitaria
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Alcaldía de Medellín

The Secretariat for Women which is linked to the local government in the city of Medellín, Colombia, organized a series of pedagogical days as part of their traditional yearly celebration of the “Mother and Family Day”. Within the framework of this celebration and in order to exalt the work of caring for others, ICDP was invited to participate and present its programme.

The pedagogical days were established by the Medellín municipality in 2008, and in 2021, these days aimed to provide knowledge and tools to promote awareness about women’s autonomy, in terms of gender and early childhood, making visible the contribution they make to the country’s economy and development.

Juliana Zapata Romero from the Secretariat for Women created an alliance with ICDP Colombia and as a result two volunteer professionals, Carolina Montoya and Angélica Díaz, developed and conducted six pedagogical days on the ICDP humanizing content and training.

This ICDP training was attended by 94 women from three different groups linked to the Welfare Homes Programme of the ICBF institute (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar/ICBF is the Colombian Family Welfare Institute) and it took place during the second week in June 2021.

“Learning by creating” – a new project

The latest project by the ICDP Antioquia team of trainers, which has been planned with the Culture Secretariat of the Municipality of Medellín, started in September 201 and will end in December 2021. It involves the “Deambulantes” theatre company, whose artists are trained as ICDP facilitators.

The project consists of developing experimental laboratories for early childhood. These “creative laboratories” focus on "learning by creating" and seek to promote meaningful practices in child-adult interaction, by using different modalities of art and play (the body, sound, image, movement, literature, etc.) for cognitive, behavioural and emotional development in line with the ICDP programme.



This process is carried out in six areas of the Medellín city, namely in the communes 2,9,14,16 and 80 (San Antonio de Prado district) and in the commune 90 (Santa Elena district). The project beneficiaries are the children who attend the Buen Comienzo preschools (the Good Start Programme) which is aimed at children aged between 3 and 5 years. Each laboratory is attended by twenty (20) children, for a total of one hundred twenty (120) who will benefit from the project.

The project uses various didactic materials, materials gathered from the environment, organic elements, toys, recycling material, among other. In addition, a backpack is used containing a booklet designed for the development of creative experiences of each child, including the topics and guidelines of the ICDP programme, as well as a puzzle game with the central message of each laboratory.

At the same time, trainers will be working with the children’s parents introducing them to the programme with its eight guidelines for good interaction.

The ICDP team in Antioquia has been sending encouraging messages to facilitators and parents all throughout the pandemic using various social networks. These positive ICDP messages reached a large number of families over the past months.



ICDP at Vida Plena, Paraguay

Since 2008, Vida Plena has been running an Educational Support Centre for children and adolescents (from 3 to 18 yrs. old) in the municipal market area of Abastos of the capital Asunción. All educators, as well as volunteers, receive ICDP training at caregiver level on an ongoing basis.

However, Elisabeth Gavilan has also started to train her team of educators to become ICDP facilitators and this work has been ongoing since July 2020.

In 2021, the team has been working on organizing their self-training projects during which they will implement the ICDP programme with families of their respective children's groups. The whole team has deepened their understanding of the messages of the ICDP programme and there is one educator in particular who has shown initiative and has a great potential to later become an ICDP trainer.



News from Tanzania

Our organization KIWAKKUKI had funds for mobilizing children in class two and three to participate and benefit from after school programmes by improving their literacy and numeracy skills. I saw this as an opportunity to sensitize the parents and caregivers in ICDP and this was agreed by the management. However, the funding for this work which was from the Firelight Foundation ended in 2020.

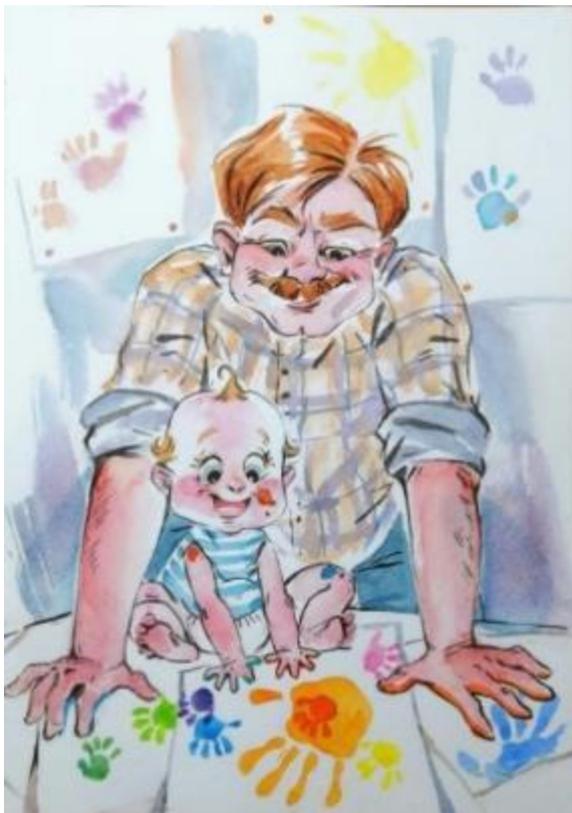
In 2021, we have not been able to perform ICDP well, due to the difficult time which we are facing caused by the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, training on line here has proven to be impossible to organize. since there are no facilities in the village.

The positive news is that I attended a workshop on Child Protection Policy and I plan to incorporate this knowledge in the ICDP sensitization and training of parents, as well as of caregivers and children's workers. We are hoping that there will be funds to run a project, but so far it has not been possible.

Nevertheless, I sometimes receive an invitation to prepare a group as ICDP facilitators outside my work place and in this way I manage to spread ICDP further.

– ICDP trainer and Tanzania representative, Verynice Fredrick.

Progress in Russia



During the pandemic, ICDP has continued to be implemented in Russia, however this did not take place in person but in a distance format.

We conducted ICDP training for the students specializing in Crisis Psychology at the Minin University, in Nizhny Novgorod, via the Zoom platform. And we were also able to use this platform to train groups of parents as well.

During the pandemic, we created and published a table game called *Empathy*, which helps to develop the emotional intelligence of children, parents, as well as specialists.

The game is based on the model of emotional intelligence as an ability developed by D. Mayer, P. Salovey, D. Caruso and the model of emotions by R. Plutchik.

-



During the autumn of 2021, new face-to-face meetings with specialists and parent groups were started.

We have also prepared a new brochure with the main principles of the ICDP programme for our ICDP work in Russia.

- Oksana Isaeva, ICDP Russia representative and trainer

The Institute for Relational Psychology in Denmark

ICDP is going strong again at the Institute for Relational psychology. We had to postpone many courses during the time when we were badly affected by Corona virus pandemic. We tried to work on-line but we experienced more problems than opportunities. Therefore, we are now very glad, that in Denmark there are no restrictions any longer, and that we can meet together in person during the autumn 2021.

We had to postpone our Nordic conference several times and are now holding our breath that everything will take place as planned in November 2021 - <https://icdp.dk/icdp-konference>. Our Kee Note speaker is the American psychologist, Kenneth Gergen who will speak about the importance of relationships.



We are working with ICDP in different areas of Denmark. Currently, we are working in cooperation with the organization Save the Children in a project called “From Escape to Schooling”. We are educating Danish teachers in ICDP, and the aim is to include children of refugees into Danish Schools.

Another great project is called “ICDP and Turning Tables” and in this project we are educating staff who are working in Turning Tables. Turning Tables is a global non-governmental organization working to empower marginalized youth in different global contexts by providing them with the means to process their challenges, hopes and dreams for a better

tomorrow, through creative arts, music, and film.

These projects are very good examples how we, in the Institute, are working for the mission of ICDP by reaching children, youth and families, and by aiming to provide for human care through activating empathy and by building caregivers’ competence.

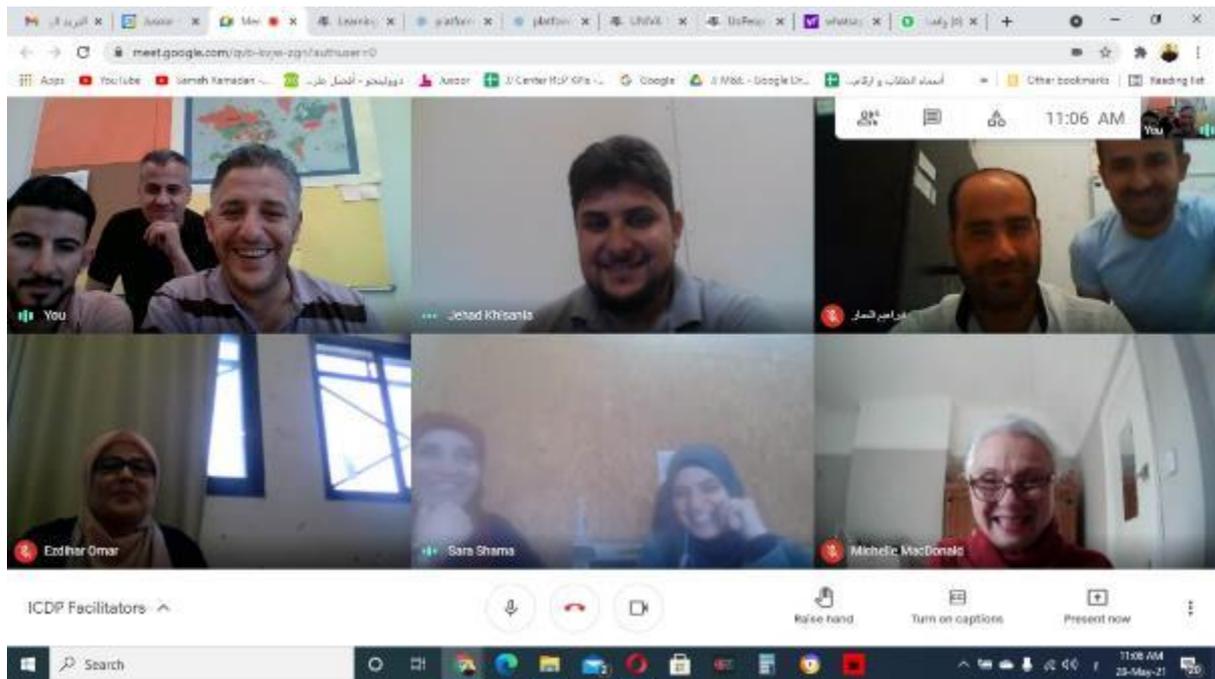
- Annette Groot, ICDP rep and trainer at the Institute for Relational Psychology.

Expansion of the ICDP team in Lebanon

Report by ICDP trainer, Michelle MacDonald:

Training of new facilitator is in the Bekaa Valley, in Lebanon, 2021

The eleven participants were teachers from two educational centres (primary school level) that are run by the Jusoor organization. They are located in the Bekaa valley, which is home to a large Syrian refugee community. The teachers (6 male+ 5 female) were Syrian refugees themselves living either in the camps or nearby.



My ICDP (face – to- face) sessions with this group started in 2020 but had to be interrupted due to the COVID-19 situation, when the schools closed their doors.

We were forced to resume via Zoom, in April 2021, soon after I moved from Lebanon back to the UK. Apart from the online sessions we formed an ICDP WhatsApp group in order for everyone to share insight and talk about their experiences, as well as receive feedback on home tasks.

The problems faced by the displaced population, added to the intrinsic problems of a failing host state (Lebanon). COVID-19 was the last straw to an already deteriorating situation. This posed many challenges with delivering the ICDP training. Power outages and Wi-Fi interruptions resulted in sessions being cancelled at the last minute and then rescheduled only to encounter the same problem again. In spite of the numerous hurdles, the training (12 sessions) was successfully completed.

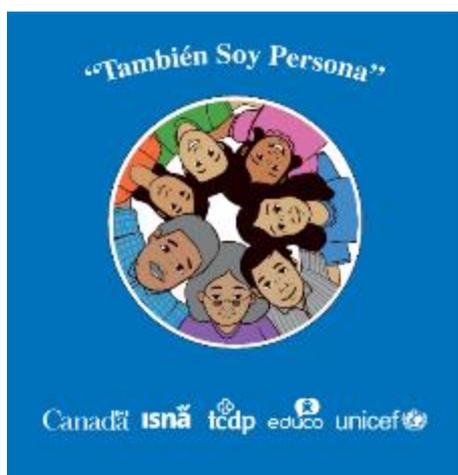
The feedback from the teachers was very positive, in spite of having to face many difficulties. They were grateful for the opportunity that the ICDP training gave them to express themselves in a safe environment. They were able to share their worries, their everyday challenges of constantly having to adapt to changing circumstances, to the deep changes in their way of life since leaving their country, but they also talked about their successes and their resilience. They discussed the impact this had on their values, traditions, on the changing role of women and how it affected parental roles and interaction with their children. All reflected on their roles as teachers and shared their insights within the group. The group explored together ways they could make some changes in the classroom and gave each other positive feedback. They were very keen to start delivering the ICDP training (at caregiver level) to the parents of the children they teach, and in fact two new groups have already been started, by September 2021.

During the time I spent in Lebanon working with Syrian refugees, I formed 17 facilitators (who are linked to SOS Children’s Villages and Jusoor) and 63 participants at caregiver level.

Pilot project in El Salvador

In September 2021, education officers from UNICEF, Marta Navarro and Marta Gomez and Nicoletta Armstrong from ICDP, examined together the progress of a pilot project in El Salvador. The ICDP programme is the key component in this pilot, and in addition the project also addresses the important issue of gender equality. The aim of this work is to reduce violence against children. The project received sponsorship from the EU and it represents cooperation with the Spotlight organization. It will end in December 2022.

Liliana Reyes from the Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo Integral de la Niñez y la Adolescencia - ISNA, (Salvadoran Institute for the Comprehensive Development of Children and Adolescents) also participated in the discussions. ISNA has been working with ICDP for over ten years and in line with their policy all ISNA personnel receives ICDP training. Liliana reported that the implementation of the ICDP programme is being executed by ICDP trainers and ICDP facilitators from ISNA, as well as from the NGO called EDUCO.



The municipalities in 3 areas covered by the pilot were prioritized on the basis of high levels of violence recorded in families and the community, exacerbated by gender issues concerning women and girls. The 3 areas are: San Salvador, San Miguel and San Martin. The execution of the project plan took place in close communication with the local governments.

In the first phase of the project, ICDP was delivered to parents of adolescents and in the second, adolescents will facilitate the programme to other adolescents. The second phase is currently under preparation and will be starting in 2022.

Due to the pandemic, both the training and the roll out of ICDP had to be modified to include virtual media. This proved to be a great learning. The ICDP trainers and ICDP facilitators received training in person as well as online - they would log on the new platform where all ICDP materials were presented in a didactic format to facilitate learning step by step. The new platform was prepared specifically for the training of trainers and facilitators, but it is not meant to be used for the work with parents. Parents of adolescents attended the ICDP meetings in person and received follow up via WhatsApp and Zoom.

In 2021, the parents of adolescents who participated in the project were the same parents who had in previous years received the ICDP - but at that time it was ICDP in the modality designed for parents of young children. This continuity of ICDP delivery was intentional as a long-term strategy. A special effort was made to involve both sexes in the project, which proved not to be an easy task.

The project met with technical difficulties such as difficult or no reception to talk using WhatsApp.

The success of this pilot will be evaluated in its later stages, however, there are very positive signs already that it is working. Parents who never expressed loving feelings to their children, were now able to write warm letters to their children full of expressions of love and appreciation. Most parents said they did not know how to communicate with their children before ICDP and that the 3 dialogues have changed their lives. According to Liliana Reyes, the greatest impact on the lives of parents and their children came from the fact that in ICDP they had to apply and practice the 8 guidelines and then share with others their home experiences – it was found that this practical aspect had a strong impact on parents.

Update from Norway

Update from Heidi Westborg Steel, chair of ICDP Norway:

In ICDP Norway we are figuring out what it means to have become a democratic member-based organisation. Previously the board itself held the annual meeting and elected the new board members. In June 2021, we had our first open annual meeting in that elected the new board proposed by an independent electoral committee. The picture below shows the new board of ICDP Norway.

Through increased participation we hope to spread further the ideas of ICDP.



We are also assessing how to follow up all the trained facilitators (approx. 4000) and parents who have been in contact with ICDP during many years. We have started arranging webinars and are looking for other follow up activities. The webinar themes this year have been dissemination of Master studies, talks about culture sensitivity, listening to our collaborating partners and in November we will have a webinar on “sensitisation”.

Another focus is on implementation strategies. The question is, how to ensure that we spread the ideas of ICDP beyond training, to organisations, governments, parents and professional caregivers. This is a focus for ICDP Norway both in Norway, but also in talks with potential ICDP involvement in other places in the world.

In Norway we are also working alongside the government (BUFdir). This is because the Norwegian government has allocated funding to disseminate ICDP as part of the introduction programme for refugees, in addition to piloting a programme for parents of youth.

ICDP Norway will also be looking specifically at drawing out the experience from years of integrating ICDP in kindergartens.

New initiatives in USA

Report from the Changing Children’s Worlds Foundation (CCWF):

CCWF is happy to share news regarding the promotion and implementation of the “ICDP-USA: The Best Start for Families” Programme among various communities who need support and information in parenting skills, communications, and strategy development. New programmes in 2020-2021 have included programming for parents with disabilities and virtual programming which already shows extremely positive parent outcomes.



There were 13 participants of the “Best Start for Families: RESTORE” Program in 2020-2021, and all of them completed the program virtually. Although a small group, the restore program and other virtual programs show similar successful results. This is a program also sponsored by Sheriff Hain, Kane County Adult Justice System, for detainees who have been released, for those who have come into conflict with the law - but are offered Pre-Trial or Alternative Sentencing, and for their families - while the family member is incarcerated, or after their release.

Further, we have proudly presented the Programme evaluation results focused on outcomes for jail/justice, child welfare-involved, and families with children with special needs. The specific outcomes of seven years of work with these populations were introduced at the 4th International Research and Practice Conference on Psychology in Education that was

hosted by the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia on October, 7-8. CCWF Executive

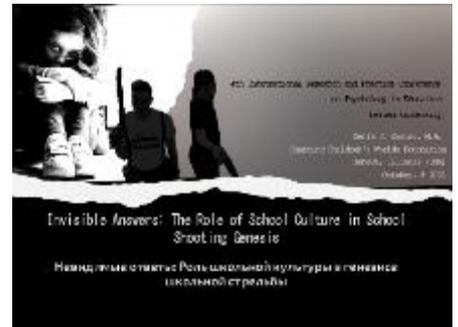
Director, Dr. Kimberly Svevo-Cianci, was invited as a keynote speaker for the session devoted to psychological practices for solving socially significant problems.

Another Conference presentation made on behalf of CCWF was the school shooting theoretical review, “Invisible Answers: The Role of School Culture in School Shooting Genesis.” This work was started as a CCWF intern research project in order to treat school shootings from the perspective of the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) conception in order to define the

possible ways of school shootings prevention.

CCWF is excited to have launched “The Best Start: All About YOUTH” program which is an ICDP-based solution for

teenagers (and their parents). The purpose of “The Best Start: All About YOUTH” is to help youth recognize and embrace their unique qualities. The programme encourages youth to develop their voice while inspiring and supporting each other using empathy. Youth learn to strengthen relationships and to apply restorative practices towards social justice. In addition to “Student Workbooks” for teens and young adults, “Coach Playbooks” are published and already available on Amazon and other selling platforms.



One more success is the “Five O’clock - Mindful Teatime”, a pilot project of ICDP online training for Russian-speaking families from all over the world. Considering the international specifics of the group, “The Best Start for Families” is a perfect match for the parents who define themselves as citizens of the world. “The Best Start” is highly socially oriented, paying a lot of attention to health equity, social justice, and building cohesive communities that could provide decent support for families in their critical situations. Realizing themselves as a part of the community is one of the main needs for immigrant parents, and the first step for that is inspiring them to be socially active. Currently, the 16-sessions programme was finished, and here is some feedback from parents:

“I liked that programme provided me a lot of structured information, easy to understand, with examples; I’ve got a lot of support from the coach, and the atmosphere in the group and the feedback were very encouraging.”

“I found the session helpful and enjoyable, suitable for any parent interested in improving their parenting competencies and improving relationships with children.”

“I come to the group to learn again and again that I am actually a good mother. I don't know how it works, but I really feel more confident!”

Michelle's background in education and health, and her previous involvement in humanitarian work within crisis education for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, provides her with the appropriate experience for this new assignment by the SWR group in Stafford.

On 29th of September 2021, she has started to conduct an online course, which is providing refugee women in Stafford with an opportunity to share their experiences, challenges and successes within a safe and nurturing space. The course is taking the participants through the ICDP sensitization process to enhance their interaction with young children and adolescents.



In addition, they will be given tools to help them better adjust to their life in England and support their families as well. The role of women, their health and wellbeing, stress management and bridging the gap between the two cultures, are additional topics covered by the course.

The course is taking place over a period of three months, with 12 weekly sessions, conducted in Arabic and English.

WhatsApp is used for feedback on tasks assigned in-between the online sessions and for sharing of experiences around the key topics.

Developments in Burkina Faso

Update from Aubin Sanou, ICDP trainer and educator at Save the Children:

The ICDP activities are going well here on the ground. As part of the project activities, I have trained three new facilitators at Save the Children, as well as a group of ten new facilitators, who are implementing the ICDP programme through different organizations in partnership with Save the Children. They replaced some of the facilitators who were initially trained but who moved on to other structures. The new team of facilitators participated in the ICDP work of the old team of facilitators, by accompanying them in their field work. This made the process of their training a lot easier. Alimata Sidibe who has been working closely with me as an ICDP trainer, has left Save the Children; however, the new facilitators received coaching from other technical advisers at Save the Children who had previously received ICDP training in 2020. During the training I used simulations of ICDP meetings with caregivers, in order to observe the application of the 7

principles of sensitization and this was useful. The evaluation of the training was positive, all facilitators found ICDP training and its topics relevant to their work. Some of the comments from trained facilitators:

“Very impeccable training. This will allow the parents and ourselves to live better in our families. Congratulations to the trainers and to all the participants.”

“I learned a lot from this training. I will try as best as possible to implement the programme”.

“I was very happy to have taken part in this training because it enlightened me on a lot of things. I understand parenting skills very well now.”

“I especially liked the group work because it made it possible to apply the training received in a concrete way.”

“The trainers have the right techniques to get the message across.”

“With regard to the content of the modules, this training must be perpetuated even after the project finishes. Also, a good follow-up will allow it to be extended to other programmes or projects.”

“The training was beneficial; it fulfilled a real need - greatly appreciated.”

“The training was really good; we received a lot of knowledge on parenting skills. This knowledge will be applied in the field. Thank you so much.”

“The training was well worth it.” “The programme was enriching.”

“The 8 guidelines and 7 principles of the ICDP programme will help us develop a good emotional, social and constructive relationship with children.”



Report from Ukraine

By Sergey Krasin, May 2021.

Due to COVID-19, we had to change our plans and ways of working; we almost completely stopped travelling to other cities. Through offline meetings we completed the training of two groups of professionals in Kharkov, as a result we now have 44 new facilitators, from Kharkov, Kiev, Druzhkovka and Krivoy Rog. The last group of 15 specialists became ICDP facilitators in March 2021; they were school psychologists, private psychologists, teachers of the Kharkiv National Pedagogical University G.S. Skovorody and foster parents. The trainee facilitators conducted courses for 217 parents. In the each of groups were fathers. It is a good sign for

Ukraine because usually mothers take care of children in our country. Two married couples finished studying in this group and now they conduct seminars for other married couples. Foster parents Nikolay and Galina from Druzhkovka, in the Donetsk region conduct seminars for other foster parents. In Kharkov, facilitators conduct courses in person, as well as online parenting groups.



Photo: Training in Mariupol

Anna Trukhan and I support facilitators via Zoom and we also prepared a course “Tools of facilitation online”. It consists of three modules of 3 hours each, to enable facilitators to use different internet platforms when conducting online meetings.

In April 2021, Anna and I conducted a “Training Programme for Specialists to Work with Children and Families under the Programme for Optimizing Child-Parental Relationships - ICDP” in Mariupol, Donetsk region. Mariupol and its residents suffered from hostilities in 2014. This training was organized by the Caritas Mariupol Foundation for psychologists and social workers of the city's social services. The programme was well received, some of the participants in the training were interested in further training. They noted that the programme helps families who find themselves in difficult life situations.

A participant of one of the groups who had problems with a 12-year-old foster daughter shared a positive experience. This 12-year old girl used to steal things. A psychologist and other specialists failed to help. Then foster parents made a decision to use the ICDP principle of positive definition of the child. They began to focus their attention and the attention of the girl on her successes. For several months, the family tried to notice the girl's smallest successes. They noted them with praise and encouragement and never focused on what she failed. After some time, the girl stopped stealing at home and at school. A few months later, she thanked her parents for their support. The girl said that no one had treated her like that before. The support of her foster parents helped her believe in herself, she believed that this family loved her. The foster parents noted that it was one of the happiest days for their family. Other children also noticed good changes in the family.



Facilitator group in Kharkov

At the beginning of June 2021, a new online-training group for facilitators was started for participants from all over Ukraine.



New research on autism



Therapy for parents found to cut diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder by two thirds.

Photos above: Parents in the study were given a five-month course aimed at improving the communication between them and their children. (ALAMY)

Article by Kat Lay, the Health Editor of the Times, issued on Monday September 20, 2021:

Giving therapy to the parents of babies showing potential signs of autism reduced the babies' chance of going on to have the condition diagnosed by two thirds, according to a new study.

At age three, 6.7 per cent of children targeted by a five-month course aimed at improving communication between parents and their infants had autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnosed. In a comparable group who did not take part the figure was 20.5 per cent of children.

It is the first time that such an improvement has been shown worldwide and researchers said that it could have a “gobsmacking” impact.

Between 1 per cent and 2 per cent of people have autism so more than 10,000 infants a year in the UK could benefit.

The trial involved babies in Australia aged nine to fourteen months who were selected for inclusion because they were showing potential signs of autism such as differences in spontaneous eye contact, social gestures, imitation or how they responded to their name.

The research team was led by Professor Andrew Whitehouse of the University of Western Australia, and included Professor Jonathan Green of the University of Manchester. The treatment is known as iBASIS-VIPP.

Green said: “These findings are the first evidence that a pre-emptive intervention during infancy could lead to such a significant improvement in children’s social development that they then fell below the threshold for a clinical diagnosis of autism. Many therapies for autism have tried previously to replace developmental differences with more ‘typical’ behaviours. In contrast, iBASIS-VIPP works with each child’s unique differences and creates a social environment around the child that helps them learn in a way that was best for them.”

He emphasised that it was “not some miracle cure that makes them neurotypical” but said that it had improved the children’s social engagement and reduced stress in their lives. The study, published in *JAMA Paediatrics*, also demonstrated improvements in how the children interacted with others and a reduction in repetitive movements and unusual sensory interests. The therapy involves videoing the children interacting with a parent. The parent then watches the video with a therapist who helps them to understand how the child might be communicating with them in atypical ways.

Green said: “The theory behind the intervention is how crucial these early caregiver-infant interactions are to brain and social development.” He said that differences in the brains of autistic children, present from infancy, could have a subtle effect on those early social interactions, leading to parents and babies getting “a bit out of sync”.

“This can lead parents to be highly perplexed by how to communicate, and understand their baby. And for the babies, they are getting less simple and useful feedback from parents because of that,” he said. “We think that these early social interaction difficulties can then cascade and amplify existing problems for the baby into an autistic trajectory.”

The researchers assessed 89 children at the start of the study, after the therapy period, and at ages two and three. The children who fell below the diagnostic threshold for autism still had developmental difficulties but the researchers said: “By working with each child’s unique differences, rather than trying to counter them, the therapy has effectively supported their development through the early childhood years.”

Use of the therapy by the NHS would require changes to how support to families with autistic children is provided. Many complain that they cannot access help without a formal diagnosis.

Whitehouse said that follow-up of study participants in later childhood, when the behaviours for autism may be more apparent, would be crucial to determining the longer-term significance of the video intervention.

He said, however, that he hoped that intervention during a time when the brain was rapidly developing “may lead to even greater impact on developmental outcomes in later childhood”.

Dr Marie Schaer, assistant professor at the Faculty of Psychiatry, University of Geneva, said intervening “before the onset of full-blown autism” would represent “a paradigm shift” in the field. “ASD is a neurodevelopmental disorder, often associated with increasingly deviant developmental trajectories as the child grows,” she said. “The increasing deviance from typical development explains why it is often easier to diagnose autism in children older than three, when

the signs are more prominent. But it also explains why, if we intervene as early as possible when autism is diagnosed, we can most efficiently narrow the gap.”

Tim Nicholls, head of policy, public affairs and research partnerships at the [National Autistic Society](#), said that some autistic people and their families might be concerned at the suggestion that the intervention could have an impact on “autism behaviour severity”. He said: “Autism is not a disease and not something that should be cured or lessened.”



Smacking children makes their behaviour worse, scientist find



[Kat Lay](#) Health Editor, Tuesday June 29 2021, The Times

Smacking children does not make them better behaved and is harmful, says a review of two decades of research.

It found that children subjected to physical punishment displayed increased behavioural problems, and that it was likely that smacking had caused the increase. This was true regardless of the child’s sex or ethnicity, or the family’s overall parenting style.

Studies did not find any improvement in children’s attention, cognitive abilities, relationships with others, reactivity to stress, social behaviour or social competence if they had been physically punished.

Experts said it was time for England and Northern Ireland to follow [Scotland](#), Wales and 62 other countries by introducing an outright ban on physical punishment of children.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children are among groups that [back a ban](#).

The paper’s lead author, Dr Anja Heilmann of the department of epidemiology and public health at University College London, said: “Physical punishment is ineffective and harmful, and has no benefits for children and their families. This could not be clearer from the evidence we present.” The review, led by researchers at UCL and published in *The Lancet*, looked at 69 studies following children over time. The review searched for links between physical punishment and outcomes, including children’s behaviour, attention and relationships.

Heilmann said: “We see a definitive link between physical punishment and behavioural problems such as aggression and antisocial behaviour. Physical punishment consistently predicts increases in these types of behavioural difficulties. Even more worrying are findings that children who are the recipients of physical punishment are at increased risk of being subjected to more severe levels of violence.” She said that physical punishment violated children’s rights and that countries should honour obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is clear that children should have the same protection against violence as adults.

“This means England and Northern Ireland should follow the example of Scotland and Wales and give children equal protection in law,” she said.

In England and Northern Ireland parents are not allowed to smack children unless it amounts to “reasonable punishment”, a measure that takes into account how old the child is and the force used. Any smack that leaves a mark such as a bruise or graze could mean a prosecution for assault. Scotland and Wales removed the defence of reasonable punishment.

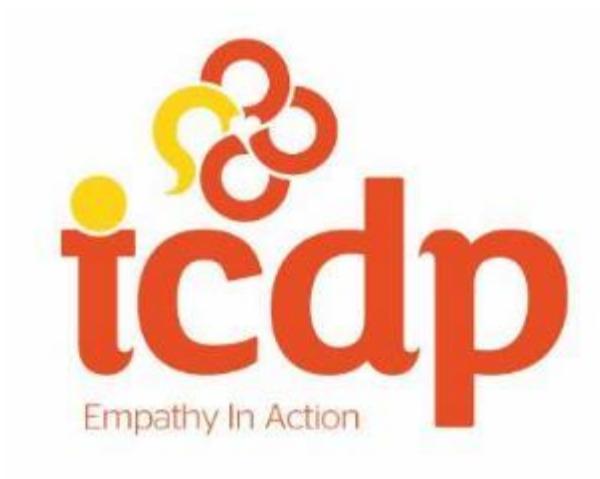
Professor Elizabeth Gershoff of the University of Texas at Austin, a senior author of the review, said: “Our research found clear and compelling evidence that physical punishment does not improve children’s behaviour but makes it worse.”

The studies looked at smacking, spanking and slapping. Researchers excluded severe forms of physical punishment such as hitting a child with an object, hitting them on the face or head, or washing out their mouths with soap.

Joanna Barrett, NSPCC associate head of policy, said: “It cannot be right that in 2021 children are the only group in society that it is legally acceptable to assault in England. The case for reform is beyond doubt.” She said Westminster was “behind the curve” and needed to give children in England the same protection as elsewhere in the UK.

THE LANCET:

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