



▲ The International Child Development Program (ICDP) is an international competence building and training foundation in the field of psychosocial and educational care of children at risk. The ICDP approach to training is based on the idea that the best way to help vulnerable children is by helping the children's caregivers. Based on recent research in child development, ICDP developed a simple, culturally adapt-

able program designed for international use. The program raises adults' awareness about the importance of their role as caregivers, increases their confidence strengthening involvement with their children in a positive way, facilitating relationships that support children's development whilst preventing those that may lead to neglect and abuse of children. The program has the effect of releasing empathic abilities in caregivers and in this way ICDP contributes to promoting children's rights and building peace from the very base of society.

History

ICDP represents the work of an international team, led by professor Karsten Hundeide, a developmental psychologist from the University of Oslo. ICDP began developing its training program in 1985 but an organization was not founded until 1992, when it was registered as a private foundation. Its mission is to provide for human care, particularly in conditions when families are uprooted through social changes, migration, war, natural catastrophes, children losing their parents, or having been numbed by severe deprivation and emotional shock; in such situations ability for caring often breaks down and needs to be reactivated.

Programmes and community benefits

- The program is particularly relevant to caregivers of children 0-6 years, but it is applicable with older children and teenagers.
- ICDP works both in the area of prevention and rehabilitation with programs adapted for use in different contexts:
- In emergency situations: to upgrade the quality of care of children placed in camps or institutions
- Competence building of staff in children's centres
- Training of preschool and school teachers
- Supporting families in general, and specifically minority groups, by

- working through networks such as primary health care or social services
- Training university students and using ICDP for graduation and/or master thesis

ICDP identifies and reactivates local cultural practices in order to stimulate development that is truly authentic and long lasting. The point of ICDP programs is to build competence and confidence in members of an existing child caring system and transfer the training to the local resource persons. Sustainability is achieved by inserting ICDP as a permanent component inside a network working with children. Ongoing monitoring of projects is at the core of ICDP strategy.

Vision

The evaluation conducted in 2004 by the psychology department of the University of Narino, Colombia, confirmed the positive influence of ICDP in the project carried out in 64 towns of Narino, in its effect on the relationship between the child and its caregiver, by providing alternatives in cases where there were previously difficulties in the interaction or by increasing the levels of interaction. Evaluations in Angola, Norway, Macedonia and Russia showed similar results. There are projects in 12 countries, but so far the ICDP aim for large scale implementation was achieved in Norway, Angola Macedonia and Colombia. The vision is to scale up ICDP and transfer its effective training and sensitizing model through inter-institutional and international cooperation.

Recognition

In 1992 the World Health Organization evaluated and then adopted the ICDP program, publishing its manual in 1993. ICDP has been allied to UNICEF Colombia since 2001.

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