



International Child Development Programmes

**Summary of the
evaluation
of the ICDP program
“ I am a person too”
in Nariño, Colombia
2004**

Evaluation Nariño Project 2004

In the period between March and December 2004, the ICDP program “I am a person too” was implemented with agents from the ICBF network, working with families and children in 64 towns of the Nariño province, Colombia.

The psychology department of the University of Nariño carried out a research study to evaluate the impact of the ICDP program in Nariño.

CONSISTENCY OF ANALYSIS

The target group of the ICDP project were agents and caregivers from the ICBF network that operates in 8 zones of the province of Nariño , who were trained as ICDP facilitators and promoters.

Facilitators and promoters were selected from Tumaco, Pasto and La Union, which are 3 zone centres of the ICBF social services network, as key informants for the evaluation. The selection process took into account the cultural diversity of the province and the adequate representation of the zones.

INSTRUMENTS AND METHOD:

Instruments used:

- Interviews
- Written questionnaires (214)
- Questionnaires using the Likert scale (93)
- Case studies (9)
- Observation
- Interpretation
- Video recordings
- Documents
- Reports (verbal and written)

Method: The information obtained through qualitative and quantitative instruments was selected and classified; the quality of answers provided were used as criteria for the classification.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

Facilitators and promoters described the caregiver-child interactions as characterized by:

- Difficulties in achieving closeness with children, required to promote their integral development
- Deficiencies in strategies used to correct children's inadequate behaviour.
- Predominance of physical and emotional mistreatment, closely linked to caregivers' conceptions about children (this was reported with more frequency in the zone centre of Tumaco).
- Difficulties in recognizing emotions and meeting the emotional needs of children.
- Limited ability to join in with children's activities.
- Deficiencies in the ability to give support to the child so that it can adapt to the new caregiver.

RESULTS

- The program allowed its participants to discover new ways of thinking about their roles as caregivers, which they assumed based on newly developed sensitivity, respect for each child's individual history and on a redefined conception about children in their care.
- The positive influence of the program was recurrently noticed in its effect on the relationship between the child and its caregiver, by providing alternatives in cases where there was previously difficulties in the interaction or by increasing the levels of interaction.
- This was achieved thanks to increased quality in communicative behaviour, for example, by joining in with the activities of the child, by placing the emphasis on positive aspects, by increasing contact in different everyday situations, by using emotional expressivity, by better use of position of authority, and by fundamentally increasing empathic behaviour.

RESULTS

- The implementation of the program helped the facilitators and promoters (who work directly with children and as leaders for group meetings with parents) to become aware about their roles as caregivers, to understand family structures and their dynamics, to dedicate time and attention to the families and to become promoters of emotional expressivity.
- It was understood that adequate child rearing is responsibility of all, the family, the caregivers and the community.
- The facilitators and promoters are interested to use the newly acquired knowledge and skills for creating better social and family environments.

EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

- The adult understanding of the child's world is another value added by the program; the program facilitates sensitization about adult's own personal childhood processes, which then orients the adult towards understanding and recognizing the importance of the environment for children's behaviour and their feelings, and the importance of caregivers, parents and community as part of that environment.
- The implementation of the program had the effect of allowing children to establish social contacts more frequently, particularly with their caregivers: children appear more affectionate, social and understanding, they express their feelings and emotions and show acceptance for the changes taking place in the routines with their caregivers.
- Children appear more active and committed in carrying out their activities.

EFFECTS ON CAREGIVER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

- With regards to demonstrations of emotions and feelings towards the children, the facilitators and promoters emphasise their interest for what the child feels and experiences, and their hope is of gradually providing stability for the children so that they grow up able to give and receive expressions of affectivity.
- Descriptions of situations before the program's implementation, reveal that there was aggression, lack of tolerance, lack of emotional and feeling attunements, lack of empathy and that there was indifference for the children's experiences and their emotional expressions. Having gone through the program, it opened up spaces for affectivity, where patience, collaboration, empathy and reintroduction of values became the order of the day.

EFFECTS ON CAREGIVER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

- Behaviour towards children is now based on an optimistic perspective; facilitators and promoters, in their roles as caregivers, managed to internalize the importance of recognizing and understanding what the child feels and thinks in order to be able to improve their relationship with them, in terms of quality of interaction, responsibility, and communication; to become creative in efforts to motivate and achieve mutual confidence with children. To achieve these goals they are aware of the need to recognize their own past mistakes and to try to apply strategies that can help improve their responses to children's initiatives.
- Care giving is understood as function that transcends satisfying children's basic needs.

EFFECTS ON CAREGIVER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

- The ICDP program promotes the development of positive bonding between caregivers and children, and it is clear to the facilitators and promoters that this bond can form when there is empathy and when the 3 dialogues of the program are applied in practice, as a way to enter the child's world with all its expectations and needs. The child needs to feel understood through emotional expressions, such as physical contact, verbal support and praise.
- There is understanding that empathy develops when the caregiver expresses love and gives confidence to the child, even in situations when s/he is attempting to regulate child's behaviour; that children need to be sensitively accompanied by the adult in their process of development. Facilitators and promoters know that it is necessary to identify with the children's initiatives, to respond to them and to appreciate their children's achievements. This generated, they claim, synchronization of feelings between themselves and the children, and as result they can perceive positive changes in their children.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE ICDP METHODOLOGY

- There is unanimity of descriptions with adjectives such as simple, clear and easy to understand. However, as a negative aspect, it is mentioned that the time allowed for each meeting was too short. There is strong interest to continue.
- There were very frequent manifestations of appreciation and acceptance of the methodology that is based on sharing examples of daily life and work experiences. Each facilitator and promoter was able to reflect and construct alternative notions about his or her particular role as caregiver, mother, father and citizen.
- The ICDP pack of material was considered easy to use and understand, but there are repeated reports about the late delivery and the fact that there were insufficient copies.