



**A Qualitative Post-assessment Study on the Impact of a Parenting Programme linked to the [REDACTED] in Nepal**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to follow up on the qualitative pre-assessment conducted in March 2018 of a parenting programme introduced by [REDACTED] for beneficiaries of the [REDACTED] (for under 5s) in Nepal. The parenting initiative is based on the understanding that cash alone will be limited in terms of promoting development of children and that improving parenting skills can be a key approach to maximise outcomes for children of the Child Grant. The parenting programme introduced comprises 14 sessions and a majority of these (8 sessions) were geared towards building a better relationship between caregivers and their children by drawing on the International Child Development Programme (ICDP). Fundamental to the ICDP approach is to bring the child into the caregiver's zone of empathy, and enhance the caregiver's ability to attune with- and respond to the child's needs and initiatives. The ICDP works with 8 guidelines for good interaction, which connect to three dialogue forms; Emotional, Comprehension (meaning), and Regulative or Behavioural dialogue.

The focus of this report is on understanding the impact of the [REDACTED] on the positive parent-child interaction as encouraged in the [REDACTED]. Four methods to collect qualitative data were selected: **Observation of parent-child activity using the PICCOLO observational tool for positive parenting; Three Minute Speech Sample (TMSS); In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with caregivers, and Focus Group discussions (FGDs) with caregivers and facilitators.** The qualitative analysis was focused on extracting stories of change and observing differences in the practices of caregivers in relation to the children relatable to the ICDP.

The findings indicate, first, a paradigm shift in how caregivers perceive children; children are increasingly seen as human beings who deserve respect, love and need attention to grow up well. Similarly, the data shows that various positive parenting principles are increasingly practiced, for children are praised, hugged and kissed more, are encouraged in their learning opportunities, and less harshly punished (e.g. spanking or scolding is happening less). The observational data largely confirms the accounts of the caregivers and facilitators, with higher PICCOLO scores for the dimensions Appreciation, Responsiveness, Encouragement & Teaching. Also, with regards to the ICDP programme, it seems that parents enjoy the sessions a lot, and wish them to be implemented for more caregivers. It was found useful to share parenting challenges with other parents, which, in some cases, leads to better co-parenting between mothers and fathers as well.

To further improve the ICDP in the context of Nepal, it was suggested to expand the programme with one or two classes on positive limit setting for older children. Similarly, some of the material already used in the existing sessions could be adjusted to include examples for parents with older children. Even though this programme is focused on parents with young children, the data indicates that there is a need to understand how they can continue to keep the connection with the children into an older age, when peer influences become stronger. Stories are perceived as effective tools for learning, and could similarly be improved to better fit the context of Nepal. The FGD with facilitators of the parenting programme showed that facilitators were very able to critically assess their own work, which will help to further improve the implementation of the programme. It is important, finally, to consider the changes in parenting practices that have been demonstrated through this study, to continue to strengthen the impact of the ICDP in the project areas of Nepal.

## INTRODUCTION

■■■■■■■■■■ has developed projects referred to as ■■■■■■■■■■ in a range of countries. The ■■■■■ has been implemented in Nepal since 2010, to reduce poverty and vulnerability in children through improving access to social protection programmes and addressing the needs and rights of children through complementary interventions. The ■■■■■ is essentially an approach based on the notion that cash or social protection benefits flowing to households is not enough to enhance children’s wellbeing. One of the key interventions of the project is therefore based around developing improved parenting skills with caregivers, including sessions on topics such as healthy nutrition, family budgeting, gender equality and the value of education.

In 2018, the International Child Development Programme (ICDP) was introduced as cornerstone of this parenting package, to support and enhance the positive child-raising capacities of caregivers. The ICDP is a universal programme focused on positive interaction between caregivers and children. It emphasizes an empowering approach to encouraging further development of caregivers’ parenting skills, is in use in over forty countries worldwide and has been shown to be easily adapted to different cultural contexts. Research studies indicate many positive effects for caregivers who participate in ICDP interventions, including the development of more positive parenting strategies, improved self-confidence as parents, improved familial relationships, better psychosocial and general health and life quality.<sup>12</sup>

The ICDP approach is centred around the idea that the best way to help children is to support caregivers in their parenting practice. Fundamental to the approach is to bring the child into the caregiver’s zone of empathy, and enhance the caregiver’s ability to attune with- and respond to the child’s needs and initiatives. The ICDP works with 8 guidelines for good interaction, connected to three dialogue forms; Emotional, Comprehension (meaning), and Regulative/ Behavioural dialogue (see table 1).

**Table 1. ICDP dialogues and guidelines**

ICDP dialogues	ICDP guidelines *
Emotional Dialogue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. how do you express love to your child?</li><li>2. how do you follow and respond to your child’s initiative?</li><li>3. how do you establish close communication with and without words?</li><li>4. how do you show appreciation and praise your child’s efforts and achievements?</li></ol>
Comprehension Dialogue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. how do you help your child focus on things/ situations in the environment?</li><li>6. how do you convey meaning and enthusiasm to your child’s experiences?</li><li>7. how do you expand and enrich your children’s experiences through explanations, comparisons and fantasy?</li></ol>

<sup>1</sup> Skar, A.-M. S., Sherr, L., Clucas, C., & von Tetzchner, S. (2014). *Evaluation of Follow-Up Effects of the International Child Development Programme on Caregivers in Mozambique*. *Infants and Young Children*, 27(2), 120-135.

<sup>2</sup> Skar, A.-M. S., von Tetzchner, S., Clucas, C., & Sherr, L. (2015). *The long-term effectiveness of the International Child Development Programme (ICDP) implemented as a community-wide parenting programme*. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 12(1), 54-68.

Regulative/Behavioural Dialogue	8a. how do you help your child learn rules and values? Do you set limits in a positive way? 8b. how do you help your child plan and carry out activities and projects, step by step?
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*\*ICDP guidelines are used as questions for caregivers to explore in everyday interactive situations.*

As the ICDP sessions are built around learning and practicing these skills, this study focuses on understanding how these lessons have been integrated into the parenting practices of caregivers in relation to their children. For the districts Kavre and Mahottari, 16 ICDP facilitators were trained. For the current parenting pilot program. Caregivers of children aged 0 to 5 years old who receive the government Child Grant <sup>3</sup>were recruited from the families living in hill lands and the Terai Lowlands<sup>4</sup>. A qualitative and quantitative baseline study was conducted in March 2018, before the parenting sessions started. Subsequently, about 100 caregivers were enrolled in groups of approximately 10 members, following a total of 14 weekly sessions over the period April to August. Only the last 8 sessions are based on ICDP content and hence form the main focus of this post-assessment.

Objective: the purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the impact of the ICDP on the parenting practices of caregivers, as well as the positive relationship between caregivers and children, in two [REDACTED] istricts of Nepal.

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<sup>3</sup> The Child Grant is a Nepal government cash transfer programme (amounting to 400 NRS per child per month) aiming to improve nutritional outcomes for children under 5 years.

<sup>4</sup> Due to the relevant economic, cultural, political and social differences existing between Kavre and Mahottari, some variety is expected with reference to the impact of the ICDP in these respective areas.