



INTERNATIONAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (ICDP) – 2025 REPORT

OVERVIEW

Ark and Mark Trust as partner with ICDP has been implementing the program since 2017, and at the time, with only one local area. The implementation later expanded to 3 more local areas, which were wholly supported through government funding by Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs, through the Department of Social Development to address the challenging issues regarding parenting.

In the year 2023, Lobatse Town Council self-sponsored the initiation of the program for its community, expanding implementing local areas to 4. The program came as recommendation post therapy given to at risk neglected young people, as one way to curbing concerning issues around parenting.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Although 5 local areas have been implementing the program, only Lobatse was active in 2025 as other local areas were not sustained due to funding challenges. Through the 21 facilitators, 134 parents and 331 children were directly reached and benefited from the program. ICDP continues to make significant positive impact in families. We continue to appreciate the positive results around parenting in families and the positive interaction with children.

The local council organized a 3 days refresher training for the facilitators as they had last implemented in 2023. The training was conducted by Ark and Mark Trust in January 2025 and the implementation ran from February through May 2025. The training was mainly on running the actual meetings for parents, and it was more practical for all 12 meetings. This included giving participants practice with writing logbooks to give them confidence for their own group logs. This prepared them to run effective and efficient groups. Participants appreciated the refresher training as it reminded them of the themes and the importance of positively contributing to children's mental health through their parents.



Role play during refresher training



Trainee trainer facilitating during refresher training

GRADUATION CEREMONY

The graduation was embraced by the local council leadership including honourable councillors and stakeholders dealing with children, and the guest speaker was from the Directorate of Public Prosecution. The speakers of the day urged parents and the community to put to use the acquired skills to support vulnerable children in respective families. Moreover, they encourage promotion of the ICDP to men to ensure wider participation.



One happy positive parent receiving her certificate



Parents sharing the positive impact of ICDP through role play during their graduation



Graduating parents

Experiences of ICDP

One parent shared how ICDP helped her become present and available to her children and partner. She had a challenging childhood after losing both her parents at a young age. The loss contributed to her making destructive lifestyle choices to survive. She had two children at a young age, however, she gave them away to be cared for by her elder siblings as she did not have the capacity due to her lifestyle. Currently with a young child, ICDP helped her to appreciate the importance of being a positive caregiver and to build a positive, interactive and enabling relationship with her children. ICDP was a needed intervention adding to the counselling she was already receiving from the local social welfare office. She has since made positive changes in her life and she is working on her relationship with her family, even ensuring bringing her other two children back home. In her words, “ICDP saved me from losing my life, and it saved my relationship. I am a better person because of it.”

One teacher acknowledged the impact ICDP has had in positively changing her character, as witnessed by the positive change in her students’ behaviour and academic performance. The teacher shared how she openly shared her dislike and hatred towards students taking her subject. The teacher enrolled for ICDP lessons, and she decided to extend her new experience and knowledge beyond the home, to the classroom. She attested that her positive behaviour towards her students was reciprocated by the students, and there was such significant improvement in their grades in the particular subject,



where students moved from grade D to A. The teacher became the envy of other teachers as students were always happy and enthusiastic to attending her lessons. The other teachers eagerly wait to join in the next cycle of ICDP implementation.

One female parent shared how ICDP helped her to address the main issue that affected her family the most: favouritism to the last-born son, an only child between the couple, although there are other maternal siblings. This caused conflict between the married couple, such that the lady started to lose hope in the possibility of keeping their marriage. However, after enrolling in ICDP, the parent shared the lessons with her husband, who also acknowledged the notable positive change as experienced in the home, although the last-born son was finding the new change unfavourable as the correction was new experience to him. The parent was longing and wishing for specific ICDP lessons particularly for children so that she could enrol her son. She was very appreciative of how IVDP saved her marriage and family.



TRAINING OF TRAINEE TRAINERS

In 2020, we started training for trainee trainers, which was disrupted by covid 19. The training was later resumed with 7 trainees. These trainees have worked extensively under the guidance and supervision of international trainers Chiku Mkalu and Patrick O'loughlin. The 7 trainees trained new facilitators in Gabane, Molepolole, Ramotswa and Lobatse communities respectively.

We are happy to have at least three trainee trainers graduating as competent ICDP trainers. This is a huge milestone for Botswana especially for expansion of the program to local district councils (authorities) through partnership with government.

ICDP has proven to be a robust positive parenting program, contributing to building resilient communities, one family at a time. It uproots childhood traumas in parents and brings opportunities for interventions for their healing. Additionally, ICDP is a mirror offering opportunity to reflect and learning positive ways to enhance their capacity as parents and their positive interaction with children.

