

Working Group on Positive Discipline Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

The year has again started with a bang! It seems everyone is up to their ears already, and this is going to be a full newsletter.

And, very critically, both the Children's and Child Justice Acts are now in force. The Children's Act especially, gives many opportunities to those of us who are working to enhance parenting. According to **Section 144**, "developing appropriate parenting skills and the capacity of parents and care-givers to safeguard the well-being and best interests of their children, *including the promotion of positive, non-violent forms of discipline*" (italics mine) is now a priority. And best of all, **Section 145** legally binds the Minister of Social Development to include a "comprehensive national strategy" in the National Department's planning, to secure wide-spread and accessible prevention services. And finally, **section 146** states that the Minister must also fund these programmes.

What we have is a burgeoning consciousness about parenting, the beginnings of a change in attitudes and behaviour – which will be critical when the Children's Act is next amended. Aluta continua!

Carol Bower

GLOBAL UPDATE

This is an abbreviated version of the Report given by Peter Newel of the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children at the 5th annual meeting of the Southern African Network to End Corporal and Humiliating Punishment of Children.

There are now 25 states in the world which have clearly prohibited all corporal punishment of children in all

settings. In addition, the interim government of Southern Sudan has done so, but as it is not as yet an autonomous state, so cannot yet be added to the list. Also two states – Italy and Nepal – have prohibited all corporal punishment by decisions of



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their Supreme Courts – but not as yet reflected in legislation. In at least another 23 states, governments have made a commitment to enacting full prohibition and/or draft legislation which would achieve full prohibition is under consideration in parliament. Should all of these also achieve a full ban, more than a quarter of the world’s states will have done so. more than one in eight – which have BUT it is clear that without an active campaign there is little progress. Very few governments or parliaments move forward without pushing. But in some countries law reform has been achieved quietly – without much public advocacy but with intensive advocacy

focused narrowly on government and parliament. Once achieved, it can be promoted as the essential foundation for child protection and for the promotion of positive, non-violent relationships with children.

At least 43 states still sentence children to be caned, whipped or flogged; children can be beaten in their homes in 172 countries; and 158 countries still allow it in alternative care settings. There is a long way to go, but there is accelerating reform and that should help us all in all regions. State-by-state details and regional and global tables are all at www.endcorporalpunishment.org.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Parenting in Africa: www.parentinginafrica.com

Global Initiative to end all Corporal Punishment of Children:

www.endcorporalpunishment.org/

South African parenting web-site:

www.intouchparenting.co.za/

Working Group on Positive Discipline (South Africa):

www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/default.asp

Southern African Network to end Corporal and Humiliating Punishment of Children:

www.rapcan.org.za/sanchpc/default.asp

Regional activities

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN NETWORK TO END CORPORAL AND HUMILIATING PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN: Promoting Positive Discipline

The Southern African Network to End Corporal and Humiliating Punishment of Children (the Network) held its annual meeting in late February in Cape Town, with 24 participants from 7 Southern African countries. The first day was focussed on in-country developments and related activities of Network members. Presentations on lessons learnt from the Botswana experience of attempting to ban, the Zambian experience of building alliances and sustained advocacy; the South African experience of alliance-building as a strategy for social reform, recent research in Mozambique, and getting the support of religious institutions. In addition, the Global Initiative presented its country reports for the countries present. The final presentation of the day reported on two current parenting initiatives in Africa.

The second day was spent on presentations and discussions concerning developing collective advocacy on the Continental level and regional (Southern African) level. Issues explored included global developments; opportunities for advocacy with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; a report on the Civil Society Organisations (CSO) Forum meeting on November 2009; and advocacy with national Human Rights Institutions.

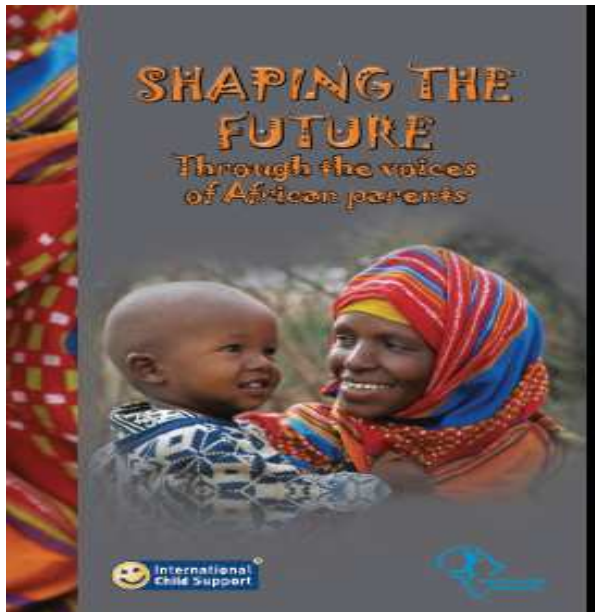
Thereafter, the plans made at the 2009 meeting were reviewed and communication strategies were discussed. Plans for 2010 were consolidated, and various sub-groups were established to manage the activities agreed upon.

A full report on the meeting and copies of the presentations, as well as information about the Network can be found on the web-site: www.rapcan.org.za/sanchpc/default.asp.

Parenting in Africa

SKILFUL PARENTING INITIATIVE EVENT

Beatrice Ogutu – International Child Support.



The African Child Policy Forum and International Child Support launched 'Shaping the future: Through the voices of African parents' book on 18th and 19th March 2010. This book brings together actual personal experiences of various known and unknown individuals from Africa. Their real life experiences are not meant to present a position of what good and bad parenting is, but rather to reinforce the fact that there are certain realities that need to be taken into account. These include challenges to be considered as well as successes to be

celebrated and shared when developing interventions meant to support parents. The individuals who shared their experiences in this book come from diverse backgrounds. Each experience is therefore unique and extremely valuable as it provides important insights and life lessons that could be borrowed by practitioners who are involved in the challenge of developing and implementing parent education and support programmes. These stories are equally valuable to parents and guardians because of the advice and encouragement which they need as they raise their children.

The launch event took place at the same time as the Regional skilful parenting symposium that brought together 32 organizations from 7 countries – see the report on this meeting below.

For more information contact:

beatrice.ogutu@icsafrica.org or christine.omitto@icsafrica.org or alemayhu@africanchildforum.org

Brief description of the Empowering parents in Africa to bring up healthy and responsible children initiative

The initiative was launched in 2008 by International Child Support and the African Child Policy Forum. The work that both these organisations are doing led them to realise that, although the family forms the basic protective unit for children, and that children need to feel safe, and protected within their families, for many children in Africa, the safety nets that were previously provided by family and communities have weakened considerably over the last decades.

The project was born out of the realisation that many parents and guardians feel paralysed in supporting their children adequately through to adulthood; and that programmes to support parenting are often fragmented and uncoordinated, so there is little help and support for them.

Strengthening of the capacity of parents, children and their immediate environment is central to the realisation of children's right to survival, development, protection and participation.

Symposium on Skilful Parenting 18th and 19th March, Naivasha Lodge, Kenya

Joan van Niekerk, Manager, Training and Advocacy, Childline South Africa



This symposium, convened by the African Policy Forum and International Child Support – Africa, was a follow up to the meeting held in 2009. However the Skilful Parenting Programme/movement was conceptualised in early 2008 by the convening

organisations with two broad objectives:

- To facilitate and promote behaviour change – creating a conducive environment where parents and the immediate environment can impart character, values and skills that will ensure that children grow up to become responsible adults; and
- Policy implementation and budget allocation – to lobby and advocate for governments to have in place and implement social protection and welfare programmes to complement other interventions that aim at promoting behaviour change.

The meeting was well attended by participants from organisations in Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Egypt, Zambia, Netherlands and South Africa. An update was given on previous meetings.

Expectations shared by participants included:

- How to develop guidelines on how to raise well motivated and happy children and how to manage teens
- To share experiences and learn more about parenting
- To know more about children issues and what is being done in other countries and regions
- To share the plan of action of the skilful parenting program
- Sharing different experience: parenting models in different parts of Africa
- How to develop a parenting program that can lead to social change; carefully defining what are the responsibilities of the parents, facilitators and the community
- Set up an action plan and agree on strategies for the skilful parenting programme
- To get a mandate for action

However the focus of this particular meeting was on setting up a structure and plan of action for taking the Skilful Parenting in Africa movement forward, rather than focussing on the specifics of programmes, programme content and implementation.

The symposium concluded with decisions to

1. Formalise the membership and functioning of the movement having established the following objectives for the movement:
 - To facilitate the exchange of experiences between organizations by making it possible for them to learn and share on different parenting themes and jointly come up with creative solutions to problems faced by parents in Africa
 - To serve as point of contact and publicity link with other relevant regional networks, coalitions and advocacy groups to promote and increase regional and global attention on skilful parenting
 - To act as a collective voice to advocate, promote and facilitate the inclusion parent education and support services in policies and practices at the national, regional and global level
 - To increase fundraising opportunities collective activities and individual member organizations
2. Establish a formal governance structure that will include a steering committee, secretariat (to be located jointly with the African Child Policy Forum and International Child Support) and various task forces to carry the work of the movement forward. The roles of each part of the structure were unpacked and initial task forces were proposed around legal and advocacy activities, education and training, research and documentation, and psycho-social support.

It was acknowledged that this movement is still in its early stages of development but interest in skilful parenting across the continent is developing rapidly and seen as a fundamental contribution to the protection of children.

National activities

Working Group on Positive Discipline

The WGPD is planning **two events** for 2010:

- A national seminar with religious leaders is planned for **July**
- A national meeting of the WGPD is planned for in **early September**

Watch this space for further information but note these dates now

News Flash

The implementation of the project with the Department of Basic Education (*Today's children, tomorrow's parents – making informed decisions about sexuality*) has been postponed and it will now run in the third and fourth terms. We are pleased with the materials that have been developed and are currently raising the funds to implement the project.

Forthcoming attractions



Themes:

More information at <http://ispcan.org/congress2010/index.html>

- Cultural perspectives in strengthening families and protecting children
- Identifying, treating and preventing family and sexual violence
- Impact of armed conflict on families and children
- Family strengthening: A key to the prevention of child abuse and neglect
- Youth empowerment in the prevention of generational child abuse and neglect