

# **REPORT ON THE MEETING WITH THE FAITH-BASED SECTOR HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2010 AT THE NEWLANDS SUN**

## **Executive summary**

The national Working Group on Positive Discipline (WGPD) hosted this one-day meeting with the theme of *the role of the faith-based sector in strengthening families and building capacity to parent positively and discipline without violence*. With the implementation of the new Children's Act as Amended on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, and the importance it places on the role of and support to the family unit, it was felt that the faith-based sector has a clear and important role to play.

In her introduction to the meeting, Christina Nomdo recalled the decision of the WGPD to develop stronger partnerships with the faith-based sector after the excision by Parliament of the clause prohibiting corporal punishment in the then Children's Amendment Bill, when it was going through the final stages of the Parliamentary process late in 2007.

There were 5 presentations before lunch, and the meeting broke into small groups after lunch to discuss practical ways in which the faith sector could support positive parenting and non-violent discipline

The first presentation, "*What is the situation in families? Are parents coping? What are the consequences for parenting, discipline and communication?*" by Prof Andrew Dawes highlighted the indicators for vulnerability, including poverty and violence in particular, and care arrangements. The presentation examined the impact of stress on parenting and how these exacerbate risks arising from interpersonal and individual factors. The particularly negative influence of substance abuse was highlighted. Prof Dawes also highlighted the inequity inherent in a situation where no-one can legitimately strike another adult, but children can be hit virtually with impunity, and drew links between growing up with this kind of experience and learnt violence. The presentation stressed that the formal sector is too under-resourced and under-staffed to properly provide prevention and early intervention services for children, and that civil society in general and the faith sector in particular carries a large measure of responsibility in this regard.

This was followed by a presentation on "*The reality of corporal punishment in South Africa*" by Carol Bower, which considered some of the myths surrounding corporal punishment against the reality of children's direct experience, and the prevalence of physical punishment of children in schools and homes in South Africa.

Prinslean Mahery then presented on "*Positive parenting and non-violent forms of discipline in the context of the Children's Act*", highlighting the links between corporal punishment and the levels of violence in South African society and the human rights, constitutional and statutory framework in the country with regard to prohibition. In particular, this presentation focused on provisions in support of positive parenting and discipline without violence within the Children's Act.

Joan van Niekerk's presentation considered the question "What is positive parenting?" providing practical information on what is meant by positive parenting, the elements that characterise positive relationships between parents and children, and the particular role of the faith sector in fostering such relationships.

The final presentation by Yussuf Phiri of ZINGO focussed on "*Harnessing the strength of faith around issues of positive parenting: SHARe-ings from ZINGO*". This presentation shared with participants the experience of the Zambian Interfaith NGO Network on engaging the faith sector in the work of supporting positive parenting.

The presentations were followed by discussion and lunch, where after the meeting broke into the four small groups. Each of the small groups reported back to the plenary, after which the meeting was concluded.

## **1 Introduction**

The theme of this one-day national meeting was *the role of the faith-based sector in strengthening families and building capacity to parent positively and discipline without violence*. Hosted by the national Working Group on Positive Discipline (WGPD), it arose from the implementation of the new Children's Act as Amended on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, and the importance it places on the role of and support to the family unit. Specifically, the Act provides in section 144 for prevention and early intervention programmes which preserve a child's family structure and include the **promotion of positive, non-violent forms of discipline**.

In her introduction to the meeting, Christina Nomdo recalled the decision of the WGPD to develop stronger partnerships with the faith-based sector after the excision by Parliament of the clause prohibiting corporal punishment in the then Children's Amendment Bill, when it was going through the final stages of the Parliamentary process late in 2007.

At that stage, the Bill contained one clause, related to the prohibition of corporal punishment by parents, which caused a lot of controversy. Much of the concern arose from religious communities and traditional leadership and many arguments against prohibition were made: arguments about the Biblical injunctions to chastise children, about how impossible it is to raise disciplined children without corporal punishment, about how we didn't want our children to turn out like children from developed countries (like England and the US) where corporal punishment is banned, about how the state does not have the right to interfere in the private sphere, and about how corporal punishment in their own childhoods didn't really harm today's adults. Much was made of trying to distinguish between 'abuse' and 'loving smacks'.

In the end, the controversial clause was dropped from the Bill, and in its current form, the Children's Act as Amended does not directly prohibit corporal punishment by parents. It is, however, banned in all other spheres, including in schools and alternate care, and as a judicial sentence. And the Act does talk a great deal about building capacity to parent without violence and discipline children appropriately.

This experience brought home to members of the WGPD working toward prohibition and the protection of the rights of children to be free of violence in their lives just how deeply entrenched are the myths and misperceptions around corporal punishment, and how important the faith-based sector is in this endeavour.

Accordingly, the WGPD planned, in 2010, to host a meeting with as wide a representation of faiths as possible.

## 2 Agenda

Time	Content	Presenter
09.00 – 09.30	Registration, opening and welcome	Christina Nomdo, RAPCAN
09.30 – 10h00	What is the situation in families? Are parents coping? What are the consequences for parenting, discipline and communication?	Prof Andy Dawes, UCT / HSRC
10.00 – 10.30	What is the prevalence of corporal punishment? What are children experiencing?	Carol Bower, Linali
10.30 – 11.00	<b>Tea</b>	
10.00 – 10.30	What provisions does the Children’s Act make?	Prinslean Mahery, Children’s Institute
11.30 – 12.00	What is positive parenting and how do you do it?	Joan Van Niekerk, Childline
12.00 – 12.30	What is the role of the faith-based sector in supporting families and building capacity to parent?	Yussuf Phiri, ZINGO
12.30 – 13.30	<b>Lunch</b>	
13.30 – 15.30	What can the faith-based sector do <b>practically</b> to change the practice of parenting? What opportunities exist which could be vehicles for communicating messages about parenting?	Group discussion
15.30 – 15.45	<b>Tea</b>	
15.45 – 16.30	Wrap-up and departure	Carol Bower

## 3 Presentations

**Andrew Dawes, Professor Emeritus, University of Cape Town & University of Oxford University: *What is the situation in families? Are parents coping? What are the consequences for parenting, discipline and communication?***

In introducing his presentation, Prof Dawes highlighted the importance of considering the arguments for corporal punishment, alluding to the fact that Thai and Buddhist societies rarely use corporal punishment and yet are not violent or unruly societies. He also stressed the importance of situating child rights as a sub-set of human rights, and that, although South Africa’s history dictated that we headline child rights, the impression has

sometimes been created that child rights are more important than adults' rights. He then proceeded to his presentation.

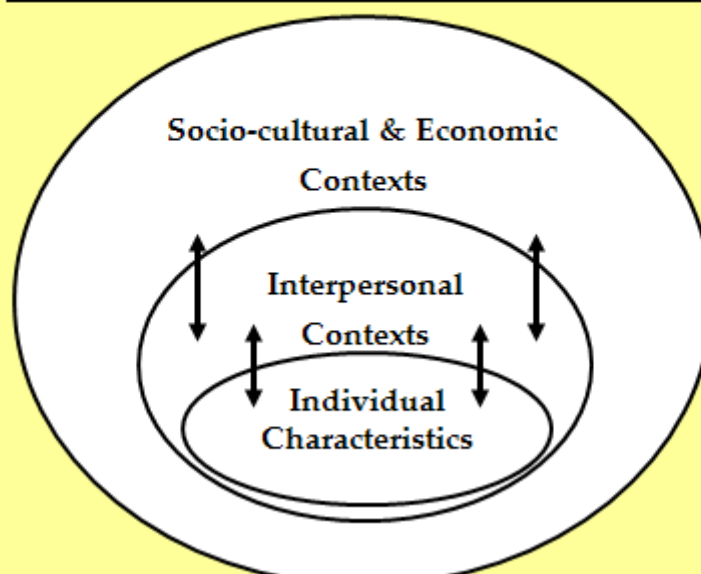
### ***The Situation of Families in South Africa: Indicators of Vulnerability***

- Families in Poverty and Unemployment;
- Young single parent households;
- Skip-generation or elder-headed households;
- Child-headed households;
- Crowded households;
- Families with chronically ill or disabled members (including chronic mental illness)
- Family member is a victim or perpetrator of crime;
- Family member abuses alcohol or drugs;
- Violence and or child maltreatment;
- A family that includes a child in trouble with the law, or a child found to be in ne
- A family that includes a child in trouble with the law, or a child found to be in need of care

### ***Some Demographics***

- Population 2009: 49 Million; 1/3 < 15 years;
- HIV infection 2009: 5.21 Million.
- Children in Child Only Households 2008: 0.5% (100,000) (2008).
- Children living with biological parents 2008: 35%; 23% of children live with neither parent;
- Children in Households < the poverty line (<R569.00 p.m / adult 2008): 68% of children
- Children in Workless Households (2008): 37% of children
- Partner Violence (2006): At least 25% of Couples and ; 25% of children exposed.

### **Influences on the Behaviour of Adults toward Children in the Family Context**



### **Impact of Stress on Family Life and Parenting**

- Reduced tolerance, understanding and empathy for others;
- Interpersonal violence;
- Increased substance abuse risk;
- Harsher forms of punishment;
- Child neglect and maltreatment;
- Increased suicide risk.

**All amplified when social support is low**

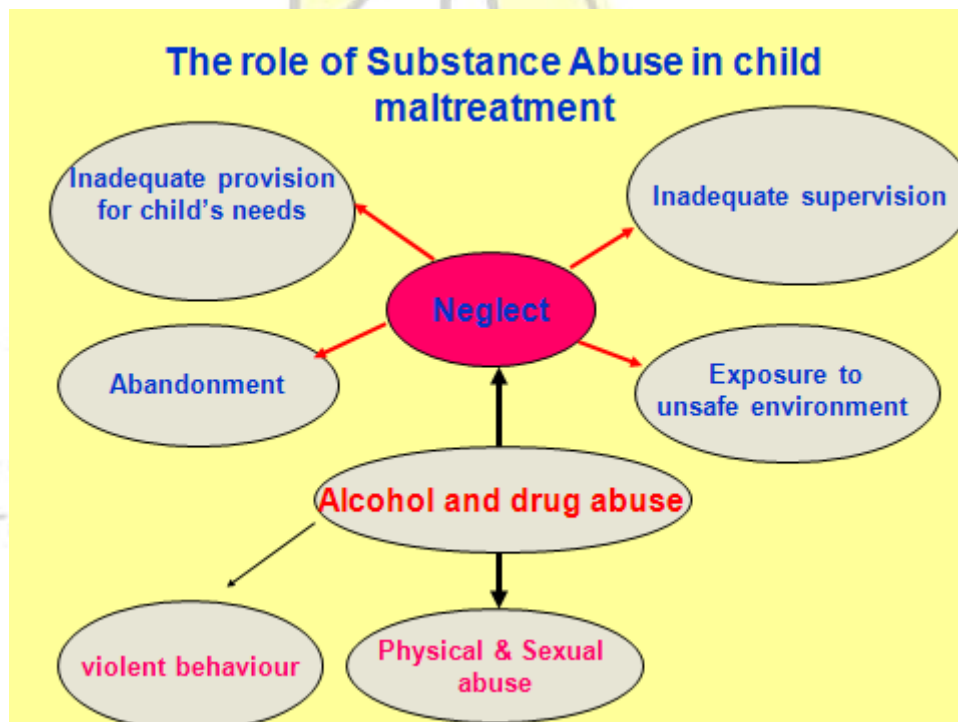
### **Physical Punishment Risk Factors: Interpersonal Context & Individual factors**

#### **Family:**

- Patriarchal and authoritarian family values.
- Large family size + low resources and support.
- Violent marital conflict.

#### **Individual:**

- Adult: Belief in CP; Young parent; Substance abuse; Individual Stress
- Child: male; 5-8 years; disabled; 'difficult' temperament



### **Why most parents hit their children**

*They believe it is good for children!*

*It works .....in the short term!*

- The majority of cultures use physical punishment of children, and believe it to be appropriate.
- A key factor is that adults believe in their right to discipline children in this way.
- Indeed they believe that they will be failing as parents if they don't.
- And when a community accepts corporal punishment, parents feel morally justified in using it.

### ***Is corporal punishment bad for children?***

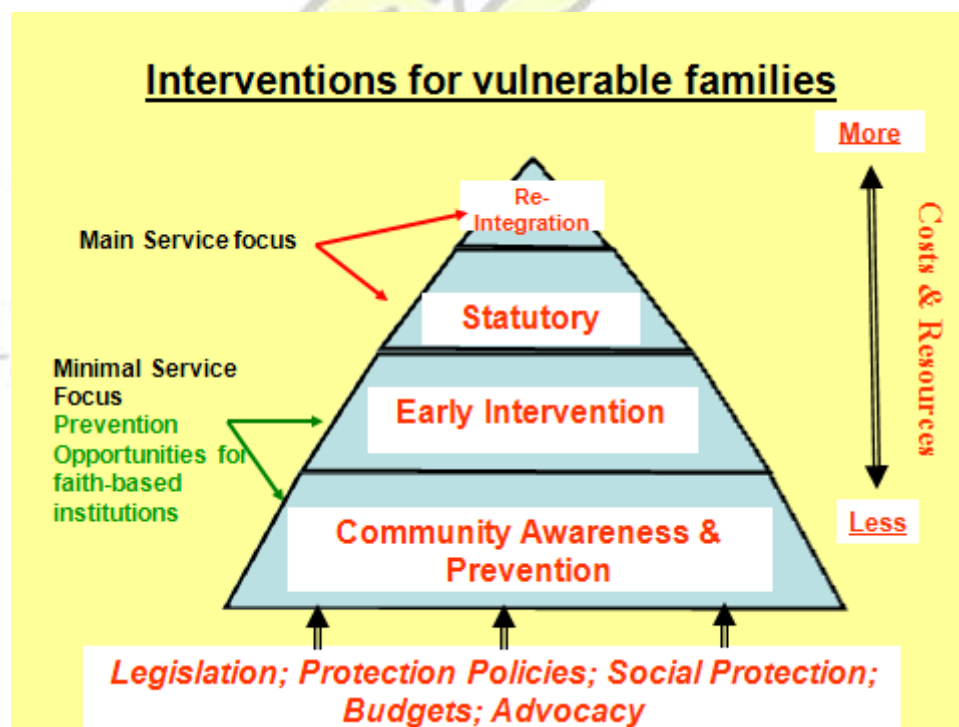
This is the wrong question!

- Corporal Punishment is Violence - Assault.
- The only reason we believe it is legitimate is because a child has done wrong and it is our responsibility to exercise discipline.
- Yes, but does discipline have to involve violence?
- Why is violence not appropriate if an adult in our family does something wrong?
- If we klap an adult we are in trouble; if we klap a child it is OK. Odd....

### ***A key consequence for children***

- Learning that violence is an acceptable way of dealing with transgressions and conflict.
- In high stress situations the risk of punishment causing serious physical and emotional harm to the child rises.
- Do we need this in such a violent society?

### ***Interventions for vulnerable families***



### **Conclusions: What is to be done?**

The Children's Act: prevention and early intervention:

- Shortage of Social Workers: 7,600
- Who will provide the intervention and support to vulnerable families and promote positive discipline?
- We cannot rely on over-stretched professional services
- Faith-based institutions are a key resource as they reach millions of parents.

### **Conclusions: Family Support**

Draft Manual on Family Preservation Services (Department of Social Development, 2006):

- family support services are community-based interventions that try to augment the family's own strengths by putting in place appropriate support services, such as mentoring, parenting education, support groups and home visiting.
- Supporting vulnerable caregivers will be likely to reduce the use of physical punishment and the associated risk of maltreatment.
- Support must be regular and sustained over time.
- Preaching about positive discipline to people whose circumstances render them vulnerable and stressed is unlikely to be helpful.
- It is also likely to make them feel inadequate.
- Parenting interventions with vulnerable families must be combined with understanding and support.
- ***It is essential to engage men!***

### **Questions and comments:**

#### ***How do you implement other kinds of discipline in poorly resourced situations?***

That question will be answered later in the programme. However, if you look at international examples such as Thai society noted earlier, for instance, there is very little corporal punishment in a situation of limited resources, so it can be done.

#### ***In relation to our patriarchal society, authoritarian families (which comes from the Bible) are very dangerous, and should be dealt with.***

Patriarchy and authoritarian families are not only an African phenomenon – if anything, they come from a British tradition.

#### ***Have you found anything about the impact on violence against children of younger and younger single parents with no fathers involved?***

This hasn't been investigated, but we do know that women play the major role in smacking and beating children in South Africa, because they are there with children more than men are, they are the primary care-givers. And even in households where the male partner is away, there may be other males in the household. But it may be the case that there is less GBV in households without a permanent adult male person.

***Retaining social workers – the Department is not doing enough to examine more creative retention strategies. Perhaps a forum should be started to ensure that more is done for social workers.***

Just to note that the 7,600 figure is true even when all the social worker posts are filled.

**Carol Bower, LINALI Consulting and RAPCAN: *The reality of corporal punishment in South Africa***

### ***Myths and misconceptions***

- You can't instil discipline in a child any other way
- Parents have the right and the duty to smack their children
- A smack or a slap never hurt anyone
- Every child needs a good hiding every now and then
- We smack our children because we love them...
- Of course, we're not condoning abuse...

### ***A reality check***

- Children in South Africa are slapped, smacked, kicked and beaten with fists, sjambocks, whips, sticks, hosepipes and belts.
- Children are also subjected to a range of other forms of physical and degrading treatment in the name of discipline

### ***How prevalent is it?***

- The National Schools Violence Study<sup>1</sup>:
  - 70.1% of primary school learners and 47.5% of secondary school learners reported that they were physically beaten, caned or spanked by an educator or principal when they had done something wrong
  - 47.3% of primary school children reported being spanked, caned or hit at home.
- The National Youth Victimization Study<sup>2</sup>:
  - 51.4% of children continue to be subjected to corporal punishment in schools
  - lowest prevalence (17% ) in the Western Cape.
- S.A Social Attitude Survey (SASAS)<sup>3</sup>:
  - 952 parents with children on corporal punishment
  - 57% reported using cp, most commonly on children aged 3 years
  - 33% reported using severe cp (beating with a belt or stick), most commonly on 4-year-olds.
- Save the Children<sup>4</sup>:
  - Children of all ages and income categories, at home and in school
  - Fewer cases - high income environments and Indian communities
  - Most common form the home - beating with a belt
  - Most common forms in schools - a ruler, stick or board duster on the hands.
  - Most severe forms - children from low income environments, in both the home and school.

### **What do children tell us?**

- *At home they had cooked Ujeqe (steamed mealie bread) and my aunt had gone to the fields. She asked me to mind the bread and the bread burnt. My aunt was so angry with me. My aunt asked me to get a stick from a tree and she hit me with it.* Girl, 13-18, rural, KZN
- *My mother came and hit me with a fist hard and I didn't cry. Sometimes she cries because she thinks she will kill me. One day she hit me with ladies heel shoes on my hips and I didn't want to go to school. My dad took me to school and I was very late and I felt embarrassed.* Girl, 9-12, urban, Limpopo
- *They take big stick and beat you. Sometimes they take plank and beat you on the bums.* Boy, 6-8, urban, Limpopo
- *We were all sitting with my sisters, brothers and cousins. He asked how am I talking to him and he hit me. He hit me with a pipe that has wires inside. He hit all over the body.* Girl, KwaZulu-Natal
- *They sent me to the spare room and then my dad brought the whip and then he hit me, hit me, hit me, hit me and after I had like, sort of like bruises, but not serious ones. Then I went to school the next day and my teacher asked me what happened so I told her and then she could see the scars on my legs and on my thighs and on my arms. I felt very embarrassed.* Boy, 9-12, urban, Limpopo.

### **What are the consequences?**

- Parental corporal punishment is associated with the following undesirable behaviours and experiences<sup>5</sup>:
  - decreased moral internalisation,
  - increased child aggression,
  - increased child delinquent and antisocial behaviour,
  - decreased quality of relationship between parent and child,
  - decreased child mental health,
  - increased risk of being a victim of physical abuse,
  - increased adult aggression,
  - increased adult criminality and antisocial behaviour,
  - decreased adult mental health,
  - increased risk of abusing own child or spouse.
- Corporal punishment was associated with only one desirable behaviour, namely, increased immediate compliance.

### **In conclusion**

- These are powerful reasons to stop using corporal punishment
- Also – it does work in the short-term, but other less damaging ways of disciplining have been shown to be more effective
- We must always remember that children grow up – what kind of adults do we want our children to be?
- Hitting children DOES “teach them a lesson” – but are we sure that it’s one we want them to learn?

## **References**

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- Reported in Shlensky, A. (2006), "Corporal punishment still rife in classrooms despite being banned", Cape Times, 11 May 2006
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- Clacherty, G., Donald, D. & Clacherty, A. (2005), South African Children's Experiences of Corporal Punishment, Pretoria: Save the Children Sweden
- Gershoff, E (2002). Corporal Punishment by Parents and Associated Child Behaviours and Experiences. Psychological Bulletin, 128 (4), pp 539 – 579.

## **Useful resources**

- Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect: [www.rapcan.org.za](http://www.rapcan.org.za)
- Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children: [www.endcorporalpunishment.org](http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org)
- Churches' Network for Non-violence: <http://www.churchesfornon-violence.org/>
- Many, many others – there is LOTS of information out there

## **Prinslean Mahery, Children's Institute: *Positive parenting and non violent forms of discipline in the context of the children's act***

### **Introduction**

- Purpose of this presentation
- Quote regarding the culture of violence in our society:

"Exposure to corporal punishment, domestic violence, and community violence gives youth the message that violent behaviour is a normal response, particularly in conflict or discipline situations. Young people will only learn that violent behaviour is unacceptable when society stops condoning such violent behaviour and starts promoting pro-social behaviour, for example, by equipping parents and teachers with positive discipline strategies and enforcing non-violent policies and legislation..." A Flisher and A Gevers (SA Child Gauge 2009/2010)

### **The Children's Act and the Constitution**

- What are the children's Act and the S.A Constitution?
  - The Children's Act is the current law that regulates legal matters affecting children and it contains provisions on services that are supposed to be provided to children and their families. The Constitution is the supreme law of our country and all other laws like the CA must be in line with the Constitution

- How do the Constitution and the Children's Act promote positive parenting and discipline without violence?
- Some of the rights that children have in terms of the Constitution which are relevant to the promotion of positive and non violent forms of discipline are:
  - The right to freedom and security of the person which entails (amongst others) the rights to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. This is a right meant to be enjoyed by everyone, adults and children alike.
  - The rights to protection from maltreatment , abuse, neglect and degradation

***Examples of general provisions in the act to promote positive forms of discipline and positive parenting***

- The Pre-ambule:
  - the child, 'for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding'
- The best interest principle
  - the best interest of the child to be considered of paramount importance in all matter that affect the child
- The parental rights and responsibility to 'care' for children are recognised in the Act

***The meaning of the term 'care' for the purposes of the Act***

- The Act defines the term 'care' in relation to a child to mean:
  - safeguarding and promoting the well-being of the child;
  - protecting the child from maltreatment, abuse, neglect, degradation, discrimination, exploitation and any other physical, emotional or moral harm or hazards;
  - respecting, protecting, promoting and securing the fulfilment of, and guarding against any infringement of the child's rights set out in the Bill of Rights and the principles of this Act (applies equally to children with disabilities).

***Examples of provisions in the act that speak directly to non violent forms of discipline and positive parenting***

- Prevention and early intervention programmes
  - The purpose of such programmes must focus on (amongst other things)
    - (a) preserving a child's family structure;
    - (b) 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;
    - (c) developing appropriate parenting skills and the capacity of parents and care-givers to safeguard the well-being and best interests of children with
    - disabilities and chronic illnesses.

- Norms and standards for family preservation services
  - teach skills and develop capacity of parents, care-givers and families to address family risk factors;
  - enhance positive family relations and promote a family climate that promotes the care, protection and development of children
  - ensure that children are safe from harm whilst in the family
- The provision of national and provincial strategies
- The provision and funding of such programmes
- Prioritising programmes in budgets
- Other provisions in the Act that expressly prohibit the use of violent forms of punishment
  - Children in alternative care
    - Foster care
      - A foster parent has the responsibilities to guide the behaviour of the child in a humane manner and not impose any form of physical violence or punishment, or humiliating or degrading forms of discipline
    - Children in Child and youth care centres
      - The following behaviour management actions are expressly prohibited (amongst other things):
        - Group punishment for individual behaviour; humiliation or ridicule
        - and physical punishment;
  - Early Childhood Development programmes provided to children in crèches or after care
    - In terms of the Act the norms and standards for ECD programmes prescribes that ECD Programmes must adhere to a range of conditions including the condition that discipline (at crèches or after care facilities) must be effected in a humane way and promote integrity with due regard to the child's developmental stage and evolving capacities. Children may not be punished physically by hitting, smacking, slapping, kicking or pinching.

**Conclusion – what does this mean for us?**

- Remember children are right holders entitled to have those rights respected and the Act creates responsibilities on religious leaders to report cases of abuse
- The Act gives clear directives that can be used for the promotion of positive forms of discipline
- There is a need for encouraging social development to prioritise the family care and support programmes so that parents can be equipped with skills to enhance better protection of children within the family structures.
- Where those services are available it is our responsibility to encourage parents and families to make use of them in the best interests of the children they care for.
- There is thus a need to transfer and heed these calls for positive forms of discipline beyond the borders of alternative care settings and into our communities, families and our homes.

### **Questions and comments:**

***In context of family preservation – please comment on the teenager who divorced her parents.***

***Do we have a common understanding of what moderate discipline is? There are child-friendly versions of the Act – how many religious leaders and parents have access to the Act? How many foster parents know that they are not allowed to hit their foster children.***

It is not easy to know how many people know about the Act – there has not been much obvious campaigning and attention since it came into force. Many people do not even know that a lot of the sections came into effect in 2007. DSD is doing a lot of training, but mainly within their own personnel. Even children don't know about the Act, so this is our responsibility.

The Act does make provision for services, and NGOs have the skills to offer to address services. So, whether or not people really have a common or any understanding of what is meant by 'moderate discipline' should not be an issue.

Regarding the child who divorced her parents, I haven't read the judgement yet so cannot comment. While it sounds very shocking, we must remember that this is an option, but would be a last resort in terms of the Act.

DSD's strategic plan includes provisions for training auxiliary and lay workers. Implementation of the Act will be a process.

Family preservation – the biggest problem is the parents' attitudes, and the fact that they don't attend even attend meetings, and they seem to have no interest in parenting.

We need to put the children at the centre, and what we doing for the children should be our most urgent priority. In some situations, it is simply not possible to put the family back together again.

**Joan van Niekerk, Childline South Africa: *What is positive parenting?***

***Difficult to describe in view of what we know from earlier presentations***

- But let's look at what it could be if we could offer families the support and the opportunities that they need to become functional.
- Again I want to emphasise the critically important role faith based organisations
- As someone who has worked in child protection for 25 years – I have grown to recognise that the best child protection system is a well functioning and supported family.

***Much of what follows***

- Is derived from our consultation processes and research with children and parents.

### ***What is positive parenting***

- It is more than positive discipline – it encompasses all aspects of the child/parent relationship and includes
  - Enjoying your child (at least most of the time)
  - Having good times together (that’s the fun part)
  - Coping with the bad and sad times together with your child and experiencing these together
  - Disciplining in a positive way – that is forward looking and builds positive growth in every aspect of child development – physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual development.

### ***A focus on positive discipline***

- “Positive discipline” is non-violent and respectful of the child as a learner. It is an approach to teaching that helps children succeed, gives them information, and supports their growth. (Joan Durrant, 2007)

### ***Positive Discipline is essential in children’s lives***

- It helps create safe boundaries for children
- It helps shape attitudes and behaviour in a positive direction
- It gives children the skills to live in social relationships and society as a whole.
- It helps children develop self-discipline and a future orientation
- It prepares the child for adjustment to the adult world.

### ***Elements of positive parenting and discipline in the home***

- A warm and caring relationship
  - Provides the context for motivating children to behave in a certain way.
  - Promotes the desire to please
  - Offers the child the security to experiment with new pro-social behaviours
- Elements of positive parenting and discipline in the home
  - Touch that is gentle, caring and non-exploitive
    - Children who are touch deprived during childhood tend to have difficulties in later relationships
    - Loving touch contributes to security
  - Communication
    - 2 way – not a question and answer process
    - Using the whole self
    - Paying attention and listening
    - Creating space for communication
  - A positive role model
    - Parents who can model respect, caring and empathy are more likely to produce children with the capacity to respect and care for others as well as have a developing capacity to appreciate the impact of their behaviour on others.
  - Encouraging a positive future orientation
    - Helping children look ahead – encourage children to dream and develop goals

- Encouraging the delay of instant gratification for future greater good – initially at a simple level
  - Encourage small steps to goal achievement
- Involvement of the child when and as developmentally appropriate
  - In assessing their own behaviour
  - In determining consequences
  - In finding solutions to challenges
  - Allowing some experimentation with alternatives
- Encouragement and praise
  - We all tend to notice the negative
  - Noticing and praising appropriate (good) behaviour reinforces appropriate behaviour
  - Encouraging children to try – even in small steps and praising effort and not achievement, motivates greater effort
- Realistic expectations that take into account the child's age and stage of development
  - Some behaviours that are developmentally appropriate can be very frustrating and uncomfortable for parents – for example the two year olds need to explore every aspect of their world and touch, the three year olds genital self-touching
  - Responses need to take into account the normality of the behaviour
- A child centred approach
  - Every child is different
  - What works with one child may not work with another
- Honesty
  - - that is not brutal – but firm and gentle
  - Honest feedback about behaviour and its impact on others (including oneself) is essential.
  - Constructive comment about possible options for change
  - Honesty about your own mistakes
- Giving a child responsibilities that are congruent with age and development
  - Give children the opportunity to learn to manage small and then bigger task and acquire skills for survival in the adult world
  - Doing with the child rather than for the child when appropriate
- Accepting and negotiating the developing need for independence as children get older
  - Parenthood is incurable!
  - Letting go is difficult
  - Independent functioning is adaptive
  - Over-protection limits development
- Accepting that corporal and humiliating punishment is not congruent with positive parenting and positive discipline
  - - There is simply no justification!

***What do parents need in order to provide positive parenting and positive discipline?***

- Care and support for themselves – it is difficult to give love if one does not feel loved and cared for

- Time out occasionally
  - To re-charge energy levels
  - To reflect on parenting behaviour
- Information and advice – this is the most important life task many of us will undertake and the one for which we have the least training and support.

***Does the faith-based sector have a role?***

- Most definitely
  - A caring community
  - Contact with other parents
  - The provision of information and opportunities to share and seek solutions to parenting challenges

**Questions and comments:**

***At the Parent Centre, we find that it is very important to start working with parents as people, rather than initially focusing on the fact that they are parents.***

We agree that we should not 'blame and shame', but try and find positive ways of moving forward.

The issues of 'alternate parenting' (using TV and computers to entertain children) were noted, and that touching issues are 'touchy' – people need to understand touching in the proper context.

It was highlighted that it is a myth that the Children's Act gives rights to children at the expense of the rights of adults. Perhaps we should be taking the approach in teaching about rights, that the issue is about each of us protecting the rights of others people.

**Yussf Phiri, Zambian Interfaith NGO Network (ZINGO): *Harnessing the strength of faith around issues of positive parenting: SHARe-ings from ZINGO Background-Organizational Profile***

protecting children's rights

***ZINGO was established in 1997 to:***

- Coordinate
- Network
- Build competences
- Mobilize Resources
- Reduce new infections & contribute to quality life

***Project Background***

- In 2008, ZINGO commissioned a study on Parenthood and Parenting Trends

- Objective of study was to document parenting trends in 3 districts namely Lusaka, Mazabuka (Southern) and Nyimba (Eastern).
- Findings
  - Issues of sex and sexuality were rarely being discussed between parents and children;
  - Violence against children incl. corporal punishment
  - Inadequate levels of role modelling among parents
  - Parental neglect

### ***The Project***

- Positive Parenting & Fatherhood
- Initiated in 2008 to:
  - Assist parents engage in sex and sexuality communication
  - Promote positive discipline
  - Promote role modelling among parents, esp. fathers

### ***The Approach- Phase I (2008/9)***

- Awareness raising
  - Holding meetings with RLs & Parents to discuss the issue & identify champions
  - Facilitating public discussions in faith settings at national and district level

"I was under pressure to demonstrate to my congregation that I was raising an exemplary son. I resorted to beating him to enforce discipline and in the process I lost him. He ran away from me for more than 5 years. He came back later but by the I had lost him. I feel like holding him and hugging him". Rev David Masupa, Head of ICOZ

"I used to pass by here and read the words ZINGO on the wall. Little did I know that inside the walls of this fence lye such great wealth of knowledge. After this workshop, my relationship with my children will greatly improve. I have been empowered and I now know the relationship between my actions and preventing HIV in my children". Mr. Michelo (who attended the parent child communication workshop with his wife and two children)

### ***The Approach-Phase II (2009/10)***

- Intensifying awareness
  - Printing of IEC materials
  - Pledge cards
  - Running radio programs
- Adopting a holistic approach under the banner- My Family! My Pride!
- Now at Phase III (2010 and beyond)
  - Developing an interfaith parenting manual
  - Training Religious Leaders & Parents as TOTs to use the manual at national level
  - Roll out trainings in parenting skills using the manual at congregational & community level

## ***Lessons Learned***

- Positive discipline can be a contentious issue
- Religious leaders and institutions can become good champions once they own process and are fully on board
- It is easy to discuss PD when we adopt an integrated approach-family development
- All faith teachings are replete with useful information and structures that can be harnessed for positive parenting
- Religious leaders need technical support to package faith teachings into practical, user friendly materials that speak to the times

## **Questions and comments:**

### ***What about leaders in traditional religion – does ZINGO involve them too?***

These are a very important partner, but in Zambia they are a very small minority. We have done some work with them, and with the Jewish community, which is also very small. In South Africa, this situation is different, and they should be included. But we have worked with chiefs and headmen as this is also important in our context.

### ***When working with men about families, we find they put themselves down when they are unemployed.***

This is a key issue in the work we are doing, and we have a project engaging men in support to families. Because of power relationships, even when we empower women, they do not have the say over the use of the resources. So, we focus on men, in the Men Engage project, as partners in the project – members pledge to be a 'partner to my wife and family'.

***The recommendation that one approach discipline from the perspective of family development – I think this is a good idea, and I wanted to say thank you. But I also wonder what actual language you use and am hoping I will find this information on the CD.***

## **4 Small-group discussion report-backs**

The meeting then broke into small groups; after lunch, each group reported back to plenary.

### ***Group 1***

- We need to take little steps, which should be coordinated by someone who understands the different sectors.
- We then need to establish a framework to share the findings from communities.
- Everyone needs to drive the process.

- Make available as many resources as possible.
- Building on what is already there and providing support.
- Perhaps eventually a sub-group within the larger WGPD will arise from this meeting.

### **Group 2**

- We were fortunate to have representatives of three faith groups in our group
- Introduce key messages
- FBOs should encourage parents to focus on communication and the positives
- Use pre-marriage counselling to introduce and unpack parenting issues
- FBOs to work with schools and focus on early intervention strategies.

### **Group 3**

- It was a good opportunity to network and see what services are already in place.
- The challenges that we face in our organisations are similar and maybe we can collectively find solutions to these problems.
- Don't say "don't climb the ladder in case you fall off", rather say "climb higher so you can see further".

### **Group 4**

- We have been reminded that we need to be gentle so that men can hear us.
- We are resourceful and we should use each other for support, and not compete
- Men should mentor men and provide a compassionate and safe space.
- We reflected on our own experience
- We should connect with faith leaders in their own spaces
- New models of alternatives are very valuable, and the emphasis placed on communication was also welcomed.

## **5 Wrap-up and thanks**

Thanks to:

- Save the Children (Sweden) for the funding
- RAPCAN for managing the network

It was noted that all present at the meeting would be put into the mailing list to become WGPD members, and that WGPD members will share materials and resources on an on-going basis.