

New Evidence

Impact of Skilful Parenting and Agribusiness training



Research approach and question: The 2015/2016 Randomized Control Trial (RCT) study conducted by University of Oxford, University of Glasgow and National Institute of Medical Research in Tanzania rigorously explored the effects of our combined approach of skilful parenting and agribusiness trainings in reducing child maltreatment in rural and semi urban areas in Tanzania. Total number of 248 parents were involved in the research, extracted from 8 different villages.

Skilful Parenting

SP involves 12 weekly sessions delivered through parent peer groups by locally trained facilitators who use a context specific semi structured curriculum with 7 modules. This is combined with community awareness, dialogue and debating sessions. (www.icsafrica-sp.org)

Agribusiness training

Includes combination of agronomic products and services and market linkage to improve yield and income. These include selling quality agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizer) on credit to farming families, training on modern agronomic practices, services to improve land preparation and a transparent market for their produce. (www.agrics.org)

Significant results on the combined approach: Academic research has found evidence on the positive effects of the combined approach (Skilful Parenting with Agribusiness training). The research shows significant improvements on factors that have positive impact on the wellbeing of children and their families. The following positive impacts are significant:

- **Decrease of child maltreatment**
- **Decrease of violence against children**
- **Decrease of support towards corporal punishment**
- **Decrease of child behavior problems**
- **Decrease of adult depression**
- **Increase of yields**

Significant results on stand-alone approach: Separate approach also shows significant impact, but on less items. Skilful Parenting without Agribusiness training shows significant impact on child maltreatment and violence against children. Agribusiness training alone shows significant impact on increase of yield and household wealth, but shows signs of negative effect on child maltreatment.

Interviews with parents and children: Researchers interviewed parents and children and they've reported the following positive effects:

- **Improvement of communication & interaction between parents and children**
- **Improvement of child behavior**
- **Less conflicts and reduced conflict due to availability of food**
- **Less use of corporal punishments**
- **Reduced harsh discipline mechanisms and adaptation of alternative discipline strategies**

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- Improved understanding by parents of the importance of play and relax time for children
- Increased awareness and capacity of parents to support and prioritize the needs of children
- Improved planning within family budget.
- Skillful parenting manuals developed and used by ICS were appropriate and culturally acceptable

Although these improvements from parents and children (from qualitative assessments) couldn't be substantiated fully from the scientific questionnaires which were used for parts of this research, they are meaningful to us.

Implications of findings: The evidence shows that there has been significant effects but equally a few limitations of our combined approach. The positive findings not only support current literature on the importance of combining parenting and economic interventions but also make an important contribution to the knowledge and practice of reducing child maltreatment in low resource settings in Africa. This gives us the confidence to implement the approach at scale. We aim to reach 200,000 families annually. We aim to use the evidence to inspire governments and civil society to strengthen the design of violence prevention policies and programmes as well as for private sector to strengthen their economic strengthening activities. For further programme improvement, the findings indicate the need to deepen our programme content on early child hood development , make our approach more gender sensitive especially when handling sensitive topics and to plan interventions during seasons where we are most likely to get maximum and regular participation. We would like to conduct further research to test the effects of our combined approach on ECD, child labor, and parental stress.

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With the help of our donors we will continue to evaluate and improve our programs with the aim to have maximal impact on children's future and family wellbeing.

To obtain the full evaluation report, please contact ICS at info@icsafrica.org