Responsive Parents Improve Secure Attachment and Resilience in Internally Displaced Children in Kachin, Myanmar

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Introduction

♦ The UN and other sources estimate that over the last decade millions of children were killed, mutilated, orphaned, displaced due to the wars around the world. This is expected to have left permanent irreparable psychological and spiritual scars (Connolly, Smith & Kelly, 2007, Fulci, 1998 and United Nations, 2006).

♦ Myanmar has been among the highest risk countries in the world due to the longest civil war caused by the inter-communal conflict, which displaced more than taking the toll of the lives of thousands. Many men, women and children have been exposed to displacement (UN-OCHA-2017).

♦ Child care is a primary responsibility of the parents, according to Myanmar culture; However, parents in the IDP camps were no longer able to nurture their children well, because of this ongoing crisis.

♦ Exposure to harsh political conditions can cause mothers to have a lack of sensitivity to their children. Attachment Theory emphasizes the importance of maternal sensitivity and responsiveness to the child needs (Ainsworth, 1978). Sensitivity is an awareness of the infant and vocalizations as communicative signals to indicate needs and wants. Responsiveness is the capacity of caregivers to respond contingently and appropriately to the infant’s signals (Richter, 2004). Caregivers’ social responsiveness determines attachment outcomes. (vague)

♦ Studies show that the most effective interventions are those specifically targeting interactional style to change the behaviours of caregivers. (Dunst, & Kassow, 2008)

Method

Introducing Revised Module, Responsive Care, Emotional Availability, Attachment Building and Evaluating Resiliency

Training for trainer team

Consultation meeting with camp leaders, Preintervention video taking on current situation

1) Building Self-confidence of the Mothers
2) Strategies for Responsive Care
3) Strategies for Building Resilience in Young Children

Mother

Maternal Sensitivity
Emotional Availability
Responsive Positive Parental Behaviours

Child

Secure Attachment
Social-emotional, and Cognitive Development

Joint Attention
Routine Resilience

The Infant/Toddler Responsive Care Giving Checklist (ITRCC)
(Early Learning Coalition of Duval, 2013)

❖ Emotional availability: “Being there” for the Child
❖ Joint attention: Mother and Child Share the Same Focus
❖ Following a Child’s Lead: Responding to the Child’s Actions
❖ Cues: Understanding the Child’s Cues
❖ Daily Routines: Repeated, Predictable Events
❖ Play Activities: Encourage and Engage in Play with the Child

Measure

Aim of the intervention is to promote mother’s sensitivity and improve child’s attachment through parenting education sessions at 6 Kachin IDP camps in Myanmar

Purpose is to promote secure attachment, children social emotional development and to improve resilience in caregivers and the children.

Strength and Limitation

❖ This intervention is the first implementation in unreached areas and the availability of devoted and experienced resourceful persons are expected to help the project to run smoothly.

❖ Funding and unstable situation are the main limitation of the intervention.

Participants:

All mothers of infants and toddlers from 4 Kachin IDP camps from hard to reach and non-government control areas.

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