Can violence against children be reduced across a whole community?

A South African example

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Setting the scene

Seven Passes Initiative
Theory of change

LONG-TERM OUTCOME
Community-wide shift towards positive parenting

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES
Parents increase positive parenting practices and reduce corporal punishment
Improved child outcomes (reduced aggression and violence and anxiety and depression)
Increase in social cohesion around values of care and positive parenting

ACTIVITIES
Delivery of four PLH parenting programmes
Social activation
- Community meeting to identify shared values about positive parenting
- Development of a manifesto and "brand" to support caring relationships between parents and children
- Activities that model care and promote positive parent-child interactions
- Bring parents together around issues of parenting

Problem statement
Harsh and inconsistent parenting and the use of corporal punishment contribute to difficult and strained relationships between caregivers and children. These factors combined with high levels of parenting stress and caregivers’ poor mental health contribute to children’s externalizing (violence and aggression) and internalizing behaviour (anxiety and depression). Substance abuse and intimate partner violence increase the risk factors for children’s internalizing and externalizing and for the use of violence against children.
Method

Intervention:
- All four Parenting for Lifelong Health programmes
- Social activation

Evaluation:
- Convergent parallel design: 3 community-wide surveys and focus group discussions and interviews
- Quantitative measures:
  - Child Behavior Checklist (Children’s internalising and externalizing)
  - Alabama Parenting Questionnaire and Parenting of Young Children Scale (parenting)
  - Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (IPV)
  - ASSIST (alcohol use)
  - General Health Questionnaire (parent mental health)
  - Parenting Stress Index
Results: Social network analysis

Wave 1  Wave 2  Wave 3

Note: Change in degree centrality (size of the nodes) of caregivers that reported improvement (red) or deterioration (blue) in parenting behaviour at waves 2-3. The red nodes at wave 1 indicate where caregivers were situated in the network before experiencing improvement and how their outdegree centrality/social influence increased due to the improvement.
Results: Surveys of parenting

Wave

Scaled score

Outcome variables

Positive parenting
Parental stress
Internalising behaviour
Externalising behaviour

Variables

Wave
Results: Surveys of parenting covariates

- Intimate partner violence
- Poor mental health
- Risk of Alcohol Use Disorder
The people who I would have thought wouldn’t be interested in it, they also got involved. And the parents who were enrolled in the parent programs they became more involved in their children’s lives.

For me I was proud of myself because I could lift my parenting skills. I have more self-confidence. I feel more positive and I don’t have to worry because as a mother we always blame ourselves for things that go wrong but now I don’t have that guilt for when things go skew.

You see, here the most spoken language is Afrikaans. We are Xhosa speaking. Most of the things that take place at the schools and Seven Passes are done in Afrikaans. We don’t know what they are saying, so how can we go there?
## Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Stress</td>
<td>Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s internalising</td>
<td>Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s externalizing</td>
<td>Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive parenting</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal punishment</td>
<td>A trend downwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPV</td>
<td>Down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risky alcohol use</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental mental health</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What have we learned about community-wide interventions?

- Values of parenting interventions are aligned with the values of this community (and likely others too)
- Parenting interventions can make a difference – if slowly
- Capacitate the social activation aspect: must be driven by someone (unlikely to be able to rely on community members)
- Make every effort to involve everyone (including men)
- Address substance misuse, parent mental health, and intimate partner violence
- Address unemployment
Thank you