

Training and mentoring in the Isibindi model: a mixed-method evaluation

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This Presentation

- Core question and mixed-method research approach
- The Content of the Training
- The Trainers
- The Mentors
- Building a Team
- The Quality and Extent of the Service
- Challenges, Strengths, Successes

Core question

How does NACCW's support, as provided through training and mentorship, ensure delivery of quality services to vulnerable children, and how does it contribute to stronger systems of child and youth care practice?

This presentation describes

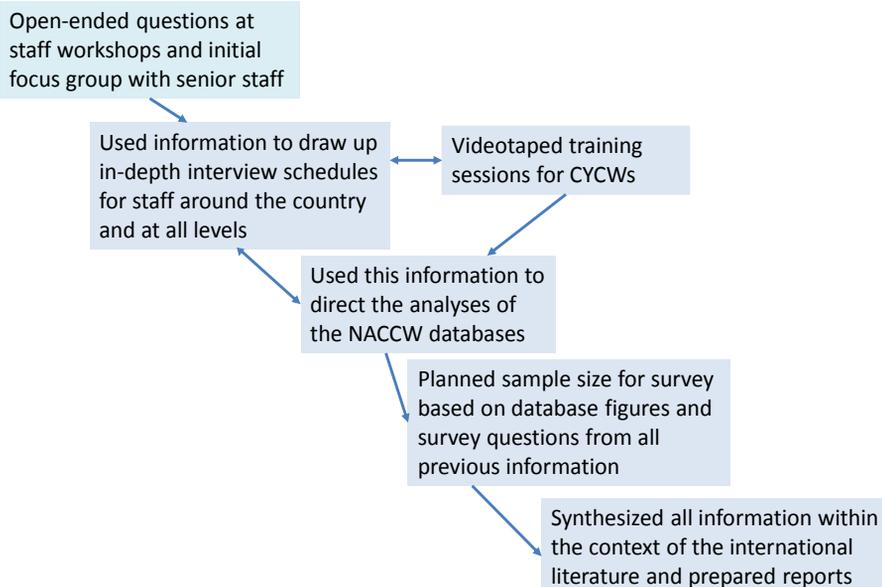
- The advantages of using a mixed-method investigation
- A rapid expansion involving new staff, increased training, new trainers, new mentors and services in new sites.
- A complex situation requiring interlinked and overlapping studies using different designs and techniques to get a detailed picture of progress.

“Mixed methods research has come of age “ (Cresswell, 2003).

A sequential mixed-method approach

- Applied research of this nature requires some initial direction to understand how the system is supposed to work and the difficulties and limitations
- Then more searching questions to assess the current status and its potential to reach its targets
- We used sequential mixed methods to progressively deepen our understanding of the issues.

One thing leads to another



Five sources of data

- Interviews and focus groups at project sites
- Filming the training
- Secondary analysis of the NACCW databases
- A national survey of CYCW experiences and opinions
- The international literature on child development and community development in conditions of poverty and disadvantage.

The training materials and process

- Result 1: Taken as a whole the content of the training modules give a good overview of what the CYCWs need to know
- Data source: Overviews from senior staff; the trainer and learner guides; the interviews with trainers and learners; the national CYCW survey.

The Content of the Modules

The trainer and learner guides contain the basic messages with appropriate activities and exercises.

The basic training is organised into 3 Clusters, each followed by an assessment:

1. The care of children
2. The management of young people
3. Personal development

The messages are repeated and expanded as the learners progress through the modules.

The Training Plan

The overall training plan is impressive:

- Modules and manuals
- In-service training to convert theory to practice
- Special programmes to give advanced and specialised training so that CYCWs can address community needs

The basic training takes 14 weeks and the amount and variety of information imparted is striking. We had very few quibbles with the content of the modules. The main complaint that we heard from trainers and learners had to do with language.

A large percentage of CYCWs are recently trained or are in training

Survey sample n=1158 (April-July 2015)

- Over half 55.9% had completed all 14 modules.
- 80.7% attended training in the past 11 months
- The CYCWs felt that they remembered most of what they had learnt.



Result 2: Poor proficiency in English (the medium of instruction) indicates a need to modify the training manuals

Data sources: The interviews with trainers and learners; the national CYCW survey.

CYCWs spoke a wide range of languages at home.

Very few CYCWs, 0.7% had English, the language of their training, as their home language

isiZulu spoken at home by 43.3%
isiXhosa 20.6%,
Setswana by 10.2%
Sesotho 4.7%
Sepedi 4.2%
SiSwati by 2.8%
Xitsonga by 2.7%
Tshivenda by 2.7%
isiNdebele by 1.6%
Sesotho sa Leboa by (1.4%)
Xunthali/San language by 1.0%
Kwedam by 0.9%.

The Language of the Modules

The trainers said that language difficulties caused delays:

“The language is too complex so we need to simplify it and make it straightforward”.

“The trainer or another learner has to translate explanations into the learner’s language.”

“For the trainers teaching new concepts in English when it is not your first language is slow”

” Learners have difficulty in completing assignments”.

Result 3: The transition from theory to practice is immediate and effective and allows the CYCWs to start delivering a service very quickly
Sources: Interviews

From theory to practice

- SENIOR MENTOR: When we start the project we start with two modules of training before they are deployed as CYCWs in their communities, Children's Rights and the fundamentals of child and youth care. Once they have those two modules, they understand what child care is all about.
- PROJECT MANAGER: It's good to get training and go to do practical, so child and youth care workers have a good approach.

Result 4: Special training programmes enable the CYCWs to address a wide range of child needs in an informed manner

Sources: Interviews, NACCW databases

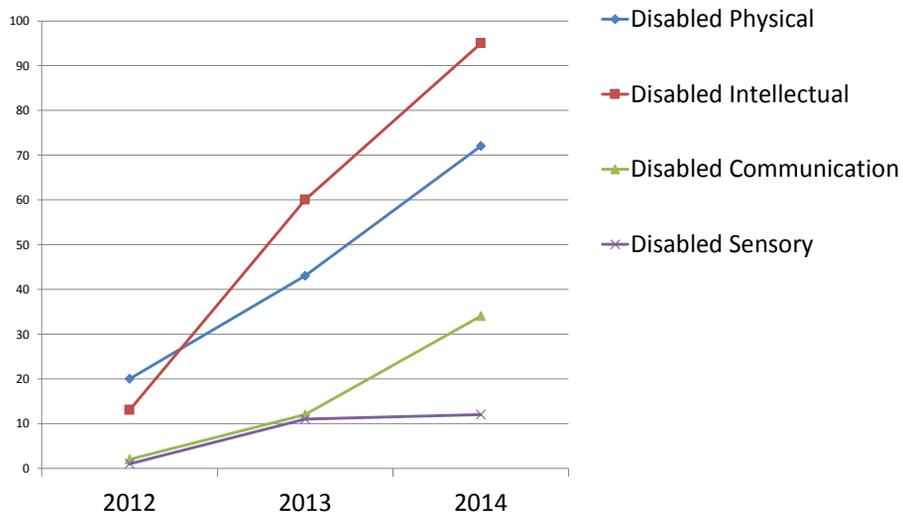
Specialised training

- As the CYCWs progress with their basic training, specialised training is given to selected members of the CYCW teams so that they can respond to the special needs of children, for example children with disabilities.
- The special training programmes are about more advanced child care activities, but funds are not always available

An example: the Disability Programme

- CYCW: We give disabled children a service; we are upholding their rights; we go to the schools make sure that they are enrolled. I went to three workshops on disability and I also gave feedback to my colleagues.

The rise in the number of disabled children being supported between 2012 and 2014



Safe Park management



The numbers of CYCWs who had received special training

- Disability (17.4%),
- Early Childhood Development (ECD)17.4%),
- Palliative care 16.6%
- Safe park 11.4%
- Adolescent Development Programme (ADP 9.6%)
- Others noted that they had received a range of different training including restorative justice and on grief and loss, diversity training and consultative supervision.

The Trainers themselves

- Result 5: The standards of training are being maintained with the increased numbers of trainers but it is a process taking place over time
- Source: The training videos

The new trainers

- Experience plays a part in the range of techniques they are able to use.
- NEW TRAINER: I was appointed as a CYCW, in 2009 working for Isibindi, and was promoted to supervisor. After that I attended Assessment Training, and Training of the Trainers. I qualified as a trainer last year, then I got my registration number as an assessor last month from HWC.
- The ultimate question is whether training standards are being maintained with the new and expanded workforce of trainers.

Insights from filming the trainers

- An interactive style of training which encouraged the learners think independently, to elaborate on what had been said, and not just restate the obvious.
- Trainers who were informal, vivacious and sometimes funny, made encouraging remarks to learners, or smiled and nodded commanded the most attention. The use of songs related to the Isibindi work was widespread
- Learners were being prepared to solve to problems in the course of their field work, and to bring their experiences to bear on new problems.
- The trainers posed questions to learners which encouraged them to think constructively about the answers.

The process of developing a larger workforce of trainers

Experienced trainers: a better grasp of language nuances and a wider variety of experiences to draw on. They understood the history of Isibindi, how it began, how it had changed and where it was headed.

The newer trainers were:

- Culturally closer to the learners and closer to them in age.
- Most came from the ranks of CYCWs. This helped in establishing rapport with the learners.
- They had a motivational impact on learners, showing them what the future can hold for them in terms of job opportunities within Isibindi.

So while there is a loss of technical ability with the roll-out, there are gains in other ways and the new trainers are helped to develop their skills

The Mentors

Result 6: By all accounts the uptake of information and its translation into action is proceeding well.

- Success of the CYCWs in providing a service was driven by the enthusiasm of their mentors who provided the in-service training and trained CYCWs in the special programmes.
- Mentors were the role-models.
- Mentors from similar environments shared their success stories with the CYCWs.

Planning, supporting, caring

- CYCW: We get lot of support from our mentor, she visits with the child and youth carers, and she even goes to the safe park. We feel supported, she doesn't tell us that we should do this, she does it with us.
- MENTOR: We bring in the partner organisation to a meeting to listen to the CYCWs because some partners are very difficult.
- MENTOR SUPERVISOR: I support a group of four mentors, to assist them with their administration, report writing, helping with site assessments just to make sure they are meeting the required standard.
- SENIOR MENTOR: We plan for one week at the end of the month; and we develop a plan for each of the weeks that the mentors will spend on site. Three weeks in a month they travel; one week in each of their sites.

Building a Team

Result 7: The development of a team whose members support one another and who are able to problem-solve together is essential to the effectiveness of the Isibindi model

Sources: Interviews

The Process of Building a Team

- In the interviews and focus groups we asked about changes over time. They talked about changes in self-knowledge, self-confidence, and knowledge about child care.
- Newly appointed CYCWs in a new site describe an initial feeling of helplessness. Later they describe the support received during training.
- Team-building is important in the process of becoming an effective force for service delivery to children living in poorly serviced environments. Stability and progress is introduced through this process of team-building.

Changes over Time: some quotations

- **NEW CYCW 3 MONTHS:** Some situations are very disturbing and sometimes you feel like you could cry, but it is not allowed in our profession. You just have to be there for the children.
- **IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:** I must say there has been a lot of development from the people that we took in last October - there has been a 360 degree change in some of them.
- **TEAM LEADER:** We love this work. The more they train us, the more we love this job. It makes you wake up in the morning to go and help other people. It is a privilege, something you will always remember. When you help families, 2 or 3 a day, you feel proud, and that keeps us going.
- **IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:** There is something about the training that is about togetherness.

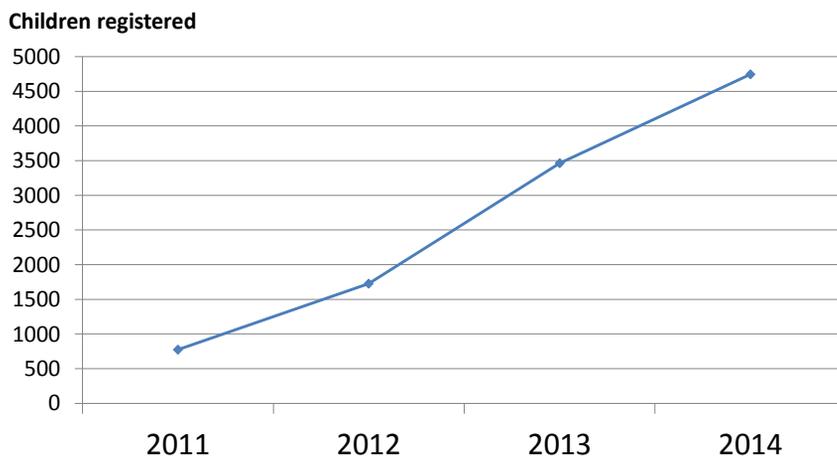


The Quality and Extent of the Service

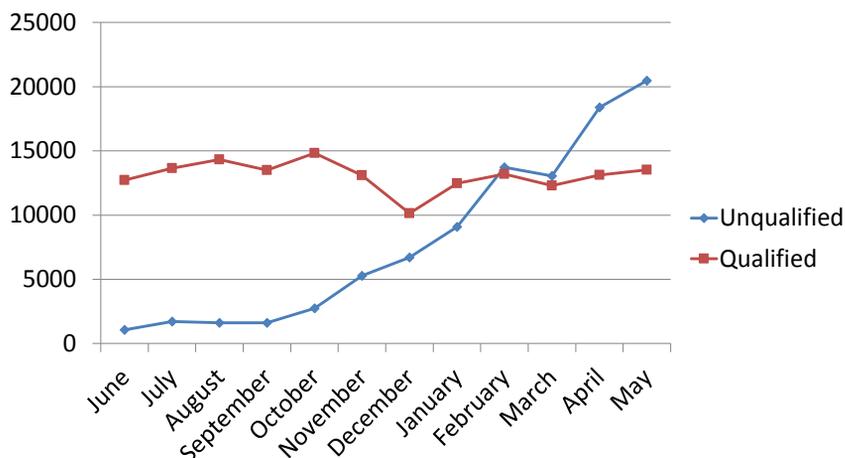
Result 8: The records kept by Isibindi indicated that by December 2014 the Isibindi programme had expanded substantially but the expansion varied from province to province.

Source: The NACCW databases

The rise in the number of children registered from 2012 onward



The rise in the number of house visits made by CYCWs over the year June 2013 to May 2014



The difference between provinces in the number of CYCWS, sites, the ratio between new and old sites, and the number of mentors

Province	Number of CYCWs	CYCWs as a percentage of the total number of CYCWS	Number of sites	Ratio of new: old sites	Number of mentors
E. Cape	309	8.72	13	2:11	5
Free State	204	5.75	13	12:1	6
Gauteng	720	20.69	48	46:2	16
KwaZulu-Natal	1358	38.32	74	48:26	35
Limpopo	328	9.26	33	27:6	13
Mpumalanga	255	7.20	17	8:9	10
North-West	112	8.72	10	9:1	4
N. Cape	153	4.60	18	9:9	5
W. Cape	81	2.29	5	1:4	3
Total	3520		231		97

- Result 10: Quality service provision takes time to establish and depends in part on the external support and the nature of the settlement
- Source: Interviews and NACCW databases

Support for the team internally and externally

- The transition from minimal service provision to high quality provision by CYCWs at a new site probably takes about **two years**.
- Slow transition from the basic services to more specialised services as the CYCWs progress with training, became more **confident** and have more **field experience**.
- The service delivery also depends on the quality and efficiency of the **Implementing Partner** and the **DSD consultant**.
- It also depends on the **team building** process
- Some settlements are extremely unsafe and unhealthy environments, level of need is greater and so are the **constraints on service delivery**.

Quality Issues

Well-trained, well-supported CYCWs formed into a co-operative team are crucial to a good Isibindi service, and good trainers and mentors underpin this.

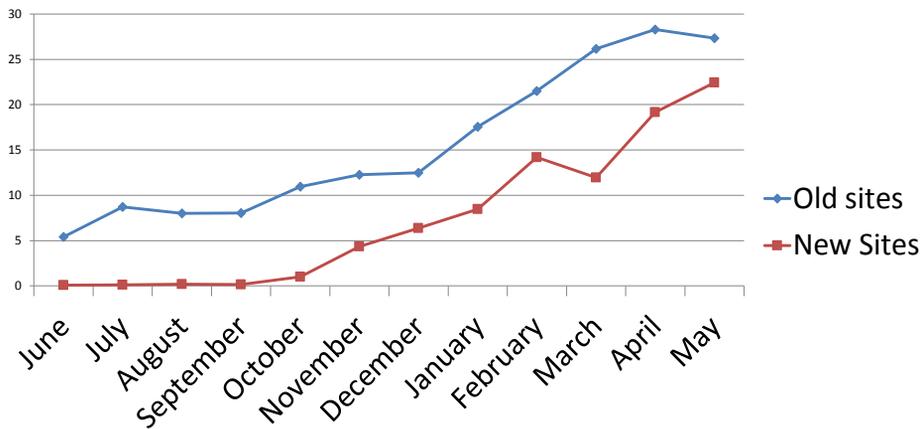
The CYCWs also need:

- An **well-functioning partner organisation** to help them perform optimally
- A **good relationship with the Service providers** from Departments of Health, Education, Home Affairs, and Social Development and the South African Police Services and Ward Councillors.

Implementing Partners with Resources and Experience make for a better service

- If Partners can assist with transport, food parcels, or funding, CYCWs can reach more children .
- If facilities include administrative support, phone, fax and computers, CYCWs can communicate more easily with service providers.
- Partner organisations vary from non-functioning through to highly organised.

The learner CYCWs in older sites were able to make more home visits per person than those in the new sites.



Service Provider Co-operation also Varies

- PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR: When we referred cases to the social workers they took a long time to attend them because of the shortage of staff.
- CYCW: The police will come and pick up a problem person, but later on you will see the person back again.
- CYCW: There are children who are not in school but the Department of Education rules that they are too old.
- CYCW: Children who don't have birth certificates cannot get other services.

Challenges, Strengths and Successes

Challenges: Isibindi works in a difficult environment (poverty, lack of resources, unemployment, crimes against children)

Strengths: A good moral compass (the rights of children as enshrined in our constitution), and active in addressing problems at every level of the organisation.

Successes: The qualitative and quantitative data show that standards are being upheld, there is a rapid increase in the numbers of children being helped, and there is impact on the lives of the CYCWs and the communities they serve.

The thing that struck us as researchers when we visited sites was the courage and dedication of the child and youth care workers. We found that everywhere.

Acknowledgements

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