Community managed childcare for poor peri-urban families:
Good practice in the musseques of Luanda

LUPP Principles for Good Practice

- Partnership with community members and key stakeholders, such as public service providers, is key to promote participation and sustainability
- Solutions must be affordable to urban poor, yet financially sustainable
- It is important to focus on strengthening community capacity to improve their lives
- Ensure community and government ownership of initiatives with clear roles and responsibilities and accountability mechanisms in place
- Mobilise community members and key stakeholders to best develop and plan sustainable solutions
- Establish a code of conduct for key stakeholders to follow
- Value existing knowledge and ideas
- The impact of initiatives must be assessed at the household level
- Find ways to ensure the voices of women and children are listened to and they are active participants in the decision-making processes
- Ensure child protection policies are available to stakeholders and community members
- Promote equality, non-discrimination and inclusion

Reliable and affordable childcare alternatives are becoming increasingly important for peri-urban residents. The community-based créches, known as PICs (Programas Infantis Comunitarios), were designed as an effective strategy to reduce urban poverty by providing the vulnerable urban poor, particularly single mothers, with affordable childcare within their community.

The PICs are owned and managed by the community. They provide children with adequate care, protection, learning opportunities and a basic foundation to enter primary school, employment opportunities for caregivers and enable parents, particularly women, to go out and earn a livelihood.

The rate of urbanisation in Angola is high. Women have increasingly had to support their families economically and there are many female-headed households. Peri-urban areas of Luanda offer few opportunities for children. Few adult primary caregivers present in households is a common phenomena. Prolonged absence of primary caregivers impacts negatively on nutrition of children, access to health treatment for and prevention of childhood diseases, increases the risk of abuse and neglect of children left on their own at home or to play unattended in the street, and adversely affects the emotionally stable and stimulating environment for children’s development.

- When provided with initial technical and financial support, poor families in the peri-urban areas of Luanda can run and sustain community-based childcare
- The participation of the community in the management of PICs guarantees successful expansion and sustainability
- With a small subsidy, the poorest children can access PIC services

Four year old Maraviha Simão Miéé with her older sister outside Ninho do Amor créche.
Good Practice Principles to set up a PIC in peri-urban areas

It is essential to ensure the caregivers working at the PICs have regular supervision and support. Regular (monthly) planning meetings need to be institutionalised to ensure every PIC applies a similar methodology and teaches the same content throughout the year. These meetings also enable caregivers to exchange experiences and maintain regular contact with trainers and the Ministry of Social Welfare and Reintegration (MINARS).

Owners and managers of PICs should be accountable. As PIC management is accountable to parents, children and the community, the participation of men has been high i.e. approximately 60% of parents attending monthly meetings are men.

Democratic and participatory management structures are needed. PIC leaders maintain a consultative management structure that enables members of the PIC’s Management Committee to participate in decision-making. Using inclusive and democratic methods, the community selects their PIC Management Committee, identifies and chooses an appropriate and safe space to construct the PIC building, and select their own caregivers, regardless of their level of education.

Childcare workers should be selected from members of the community in a way that gives everyone the same opportunity.

The training of caregivers should always have a strong practical and theoretical component to allow caregivers to learn by doing and compensate for low educational levels. The training should include the basics of health and hygiene, nutrition, child protection and safety issues.

Appropriate records of all children should be maintained in the PIC (including health and vaccination cards) and management information should be accessible to other stakeholders.

Clear guidelines and key information about child protection should be on public display.

Buildings should meet the guidance from the Ministry of Social Welfare and Reintegration (MINARS) on safety, space for play, kitchen, storage and rest areas.

The caregivers should always promote good hygiene.

Build a safe environment for children to learn and play.

The four main principles of the Convention for the Rights of the Child are:

1. The survival and development of the child
2. The best interests of the child
3. Non-discrimination
4. Participation

LUPP promotes these guiding principles throughout all of its models of good practice.

Minimum Standards for Education

All children have the right to education through lessons, games, reading, play and other learning activities.

Keeping Safe: Wherever children learn and play they should be safe. Children have the right to learn in a place where they feel comfortable and free from harm.

Teaching: Education is for all children: girls and boys, children with disabilities, children of different ages and from different ethnic and social backgrounds. Teaching and learning should be adapted to their needs and keep them actively involved.

Learning: What children learn should help them to cope with the environment they are living in. Children’s early childhood development should be right for their language, ability, where they come from and how they live.

Supporting childcare workers: There should be sufficient childcare workers and teachers for all children, supported by the community crèche Management Committees, paid regularly and trained to understand children’s needs.

Standards in this document have been selected and adapted from Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction, published by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and cross-checked with guidelines from the Ministry of Social Welfare and Reintegration (MINARS) Angola.

Teresa José João, one of the caregivers trained through LUPP, is teaching four and five year old children in Kufiquissa crèche. LUPP trains Early Childhood Development professionals to look after children and teach them the basics to enter schools. The trained caregivers benefit by receiving a steady income in their jobs as well as acquiring care and management skills.
Impact of the PIC model on poverty reduction

Impact on children

Children attending the PICs derive many direct benefits. They receive regular care and protection from many of the risks associated with being left unattended in the slums of Luanda, such as injury, abuse, abduction and limited learning opportunities. The PICs also provide more regular and nutritious meals (breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack). Children attending the PICs have displayed positive behaviour changes such as improved socialisation skills, discipline and familiarity with daily routines. More importantly, children in the PICs are learning the foundations of literacy and numeracy required to enter primary school, including the alphabet, numbers/counting, Portuguese language and discipline. It has also been found that parents have been encouraged to invest further in their children’s education once they realise the learning potential of their children.

Impact on caregivers

Caregivers also benefit from the PICs. They tend to be between 18 and 30 years of age and are often women with a certain amount of education but with little possibility of obtaining employment in the formal sector. Working as a caregiver provides them with a stable source of income – an average monthly salary of US$100, which is twice the minimum rate. The caregivers enjoy higher social status and respect within their communities and have acquired new and improved childcare and management skills which benefit the children attending the PICs but also the children within their own households and family.

Impact on parents and families

The PICs enable parents and children, who look after their siblings, to undertake other activities. It allows siblings, who may normally care for their younger brothers or sisters, to attend school or study and adults to engage in additional economic activities by freeing up their time. In addition, parents value receiving regular information on their children’s development and health, which they receive from caregivers.
Sofia Massanga José with her four year old daughter Flora José Valentim outside Amizade crèche. Flora has been attending the Amizade PIC for three years. Before Flora started attending the PIC in Hoji-Ya-Henda, Sofia used to ask neighbours to look after Flora or leave her with family members while she went to work. Flora used to cry a lot and would only play on her own. Since attending the PIC, she no longer cries when left, is more social and plays with other children. She has learnt the alphabet and to count to 10. She has also learnt to organise her toys. When she gets home, she asks her parents lots of questions about what she has done and seen in the streets and is clearly developing more. Knowing that she can leave Flora in the crèche and be confident that she is protected and prepared for school, Sofia is now able to do a computer course after work before she picks up Flora.

Lessons learnt

a) Working in partnership with key actors – government, communities and NGOs – is fundamental for the sustainability of the LUPP community-managed PIC model. Partnerships should be formalised and roles and responsibilities of each actor clarified.

b) Value each partner’s experience and contribution to the partnership. One of the programme strategies is to value existing knowledge and ideas. The PIC model builds on MINARS’ previous experience but enhances the model through greater community involvement.

c) The PIC model requires substantial community mobilisation, which requires time to manage the relationships between the various stakeholders.

d) It is essential to ensure the cohesion of the PIC Management Group and to clarify the roles, expectations and responsibilities of community members and different stakeholders in the PIC partnership. Cohesion needs to be ensured through the community mobilisation process. Lack of cohesion could lead to reduced commitment.

e) Poor communities can successfully sustain and manage childcare services when provided with the initial technical and financial support necessary.

f) The poorest families cannot afford the monthly fee of US$15 required for each child. A subsidy is required to support the poorest families.

g) The accountability mechanism provided by the Parent’s Committee meetings and participation of parents has contributed to improve the quality of services in the PICs and further development of the PICs by parents.

h) Churches have proved to be important community partners in the provision of Early Childhood Development services. Churches often have land available for communities to use. They can also provide management support to the PIC and can sometimes enable the poorest children and families to benefit from the PICs.

Maria Henriques Francisco, who cooks in the kitchen at the crèche providing meals for the children, is holding two year old Roberta Francisco de Sousa. The staff of the crèches also benefit from the programme. They tend to be younger, more educated women but with little possibility to obtain employment in the formal sector. Now they have a stable source of income and are enjoying a much higher social status and respect from their communities.
Operational information

Technical aspects required—minimum standards

- Age range for children: 2 to 6 years old
- Total floor area of 120 square metres
- Adequate space for 60 to 80 children
- In urban areas, PICs should exceed MINARS’ basic PIC construction guide if space allows, or reduce the number of children to fit the available space
- PICs should have a kitchen and storage area not less than 30 square metres
- Outside play area of 90 square metres
- Water tank or a standpipe
- Pour flush toilet, in the absence of adequate sanitation facilities
- The Care and Protection in PICs need to follow MINARS’ technical guidelines
- Ensure each PIC has a child protection policy and key information is on public display
- MINARS’ pre-school curriculum should be followed. This was updated by the Ministry of Education in February 2006 for children age 4 to 6 years old.

Social aspects

Demand is created for PICs through community mobilisation. Poor communities, local municipal and provincial governments are targeted with information about the value and long-term benefits of PICs for children, parents and the community as a whole. Once a community group’s interest has been identified, they receive information about how PICs operate, including the proposed operating structures, partnership model and their role, as well as how to set up a Management Committee to run the PIC. The group then has an opportunity to visit a PIC in operation to gain practical experience from caregivers and the community management team about the opportunities and how to overcome initial problems and constraints. The group then makes a decision whether to set up a PIC and takes on responsibility for identifying the space and meeting the operating costs. Once this has been done, the group elects a Management Committee and five members to be trained as caregivers. A leader is selected from the Management Committee by her/his peers. The Management Committee meets regularly to share information about progress and to resolve any problems.

Institutional aspects

The PIC is a community-based organisation that mobilises community resources to provide care and learning for children. Each PIC has a simple but effective management structure. A Management Committee is established that includes a Manager, Treasurer and Secretary. In addition there are 4 or 5 caregivers and a cook in each PIC. One caregiver is elected in an advisory capacity to the Management Committee on a rotating basis. The Management Committee is responsible for the day-to-day management of the PIC and makes consensus-based decisions. In addition, each PIC has a Parents’ Committee, which includes the parents of the children participating in the programme. The aim of the Parents’ Committee is to provide an interface to improve parents’ participation and the performance and accountability of the caregivers. The PIC Management Committee reports to the Parents’ Committee on a regular basis. The Parents Committee meets monthly to discuss accounts, identify needs and agree on fees. The PIC Manager belongs to the PIC Management Committee which hires staff i.e. the caregivers and cooks. However, the Management Committee is accountable to the community and, in particular, to the parents of the children.

Due to the scarcity of public spaces to build PICs, the Management Committees normally rent private spaces to build the PIC structures. They normally use space that belongs to one of the members of the Management Committee, although a few PICs are built on land that belongs to third parties. The Management Committee signs an agreement with the space/land owner before the structure is built, agreeing conditions and rent.

Financial aspects

Fees for PICs were set based on a pilot experience with 70 children in Hoji-Ya-Henda. The amount of $15/child/month was calculated to cover caregivers’ salaries, adequate food and small expenses. The Management Committee, in consultation with parents, agreed the fee should be paid during the first 8 days of the month and collected and kept by the PIC treasurer. The treasurer pays for expenses authorised by the Manager and prepares a monthly financial report. The report is also shared with the Parents’ Committee, to ensure transparency. The Management Committee consults the parents concerning changes in the fee, additional resource requirements and changes in the routines or curriculum of the PICs.

Sustainability of approach

The PICs are financially self-sustainable. The fees normally cover the operating costs and can even provide a small profit, which can be used to cover the cost of small repairs, maintenance and replace basic equipment. However, it is insufficient to cover major capital investments.

The managers and caregivers have the skills to manage the PICs and care for the children respectively. The programme supports a monthly methodological meeting that enables PIC staff to receive support from MINARS and Kandengues Unidos, a local NGO. These regular meetings have contributed to strengthen staff capacity and self-confidence. In addition, MINARS has designated an Early Child Development (ECD) focal point whose main role will be to monitor and provide technical support to these community initiatives.
How to replicate the model

The PIC formation process always begins with community mobilization. Areas with a high concentration of children and neighbourhoods demonstrating signs of solidarity are targeted. This assessment is used to determine the demand for childcare, willingness to work together, and helps to determine the socio-economic status of the residents. If there is enough interest in a neighbourhood, a community group is formed to start a PIC. A typical community group has a leader, treasurer and between 8 to 12 other members. Five members are chosen to become caregivers. The community group is responsible for finding space for the PIC and to cover the operating costs. Once the group is established, leaders elected and land is secured, the cost of the building and the initial equipment is required. The caregivers are trained by MINARS and Kandengues Unidos.

Once a critical mass of 30 children regularly attends the PIC, a Parents’ Committee is established. The aim of this committee is to provide an interface to improve parents’ participation and the performance and accountability of caregivers. The Parents’ Committee meets monthly and caregivers report on key activities and seek parents’ advice and participation.

The five group members/caregivers undergo a 45-day training course carried out in partnership by MINARS and Kandengues Unidos who undertake the training jointly. Caregivers learn about the basics of child development, how to interact with children of different age groups and how to plan daily activities. The training is normally followed by individual on-the-job supervision by trainers from MINARS and Kandengues Unidos to provide support and ensure caregivers apply what they have learnt correctly. The trainers and caregivers meet monthly. The aim of the meeting is to share experiences, both problems and solutions, discuss methodological issues arising from their respective PICs, and obtain support from trainers. Caregivers have appreciated the assistance and professional development obtained, as well as the regular interaction with parents. On a monthly basis, the parents pay $15 per child that goes towards food, paying the salaries of the caregivers and other operating expenses such as water, hygiene products, etc.

Costs of replicating the model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost/child/day (US$)</th>
<th>% of total cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and other utilities</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caretaker incentive</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>100</td>
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Table 1: The operating cost structure for a standard PIC in peri-urban Luanda—based on 70 children and 20 working days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Average cost per PIC (US $)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building materials</td>
<td>5,373</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>2,781</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9,187</td>
<td>100</td>
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Table 2: Average cost of setting-up a PIC in peri-urban Luanda

The average cost to set-up a PIC is around $131 per child, based on 70 children in each PIC. Parent’s annual contribution is estimated around $190, including the annual registration fee of $10/child.
Three year old Carla de Fátima tells her father, Jorge Mpindi, what she did at the crèche when he picks her up at the end of the day. Family members can leave children in the crèche and be confident that they are protected and prepared for school while they go to work.

Tabita Matias drops her three year old son, Matias Geldon, at the crèche on her way to work in the market, confident that he will be safe in the care of trained professionals.

João Marques Celestina is happy to see his one year old daughter, Marcela da Silva Ventura, when he picks her up at the end of his working day.

Filomena Jose Miguel takes her two year old daughter, Iracelma de Jesus Miguel, to the crèche on her way to work.

Three year old Elidiu and Jeremias Nsunda are taken to the crèche by their uncle.

Mule Gabriel is dropping his five year old daughter, Gemima Mule Gabriel, off at the creche on his way to work.
What is LUPP?

The Luanda Urban Poverty Programme (LUPP) is a partnership between CARE International, Development Workshop, Save the Children UK and One World Action. It is supported by the Department for International Development (DFID) and has been ongoing since 1999. The current phase, LUPP2, started in April 2003 and continues until September 2006. LUPP2 is implemented in four of nine municipalities in Luanda, namely Sambizanga, Cacuaco, Cazenga and Kilamba Kiaxi.

What does LUPP do?

LUPP partners work in collaboration with the Government of Angola to support the government to meet its declared goal of halving poverty levels by 2015. The programme is implemented in partnership with civil society organisations, NGOs, service providers and government departments/ministries. LUPP engages to promote pro-poor policies, especially in seeking to guarantee the provision of basic services to Angolan citizens.

The purpose of LUPP2 is to influence equitable, inclusive, pro-poor policies and best practices for Angola for poverty reduction in urban Luanda. The policy influencing agenda is the overarching framework of the programme. LUPP seeks to influence poverty reduction in Luanda by:

- Demonstrating effective, sustainable, inclusive and replicable best practice strategies (models, methods and approaches) for basic service delivery (water, sanitation, rubbish collection, community crèches), livelihood support (micro-credit, savings, Business Development Services (BDS) and consumer cooperatives), social capital, governance and poverty reduction more generally which can be effectively replicated in poor urban areas to bring about positive change in the lives of poor urban families;
- Facilitating active learning and understanding on urban poverty issues and policies by key stakeholders and producing strategic information on the lessons, messages and methods emerging from the models and approaches, adapted to demands for policy relevant information;
- Strengthening the commitment and capacity of local authorities and civil society to promote and implement inclusive and participatory local development;
- Promoting greater engagement, inclusion and accountability between government and civil society on urban issues, largely through the creation of spaces in which different actors can come into contact with the lessons, messages and methods, absorb their implications and take forward the work of integrating them into policy and practice.

More information on LUPP can be found at www.oneworldaction.org

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Supported by

DFID Department for International Development

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Development Workshop
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