

WEBINAR

Caring for the Caregivers

A path towards playful parenting

March 31, 2021

14:00 - 15:30 CET



The LEGO Foundation



Your active participation is welcome!



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Q&A

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PANELISTS



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Playful Parenting
and Caregiver
Wellbeing



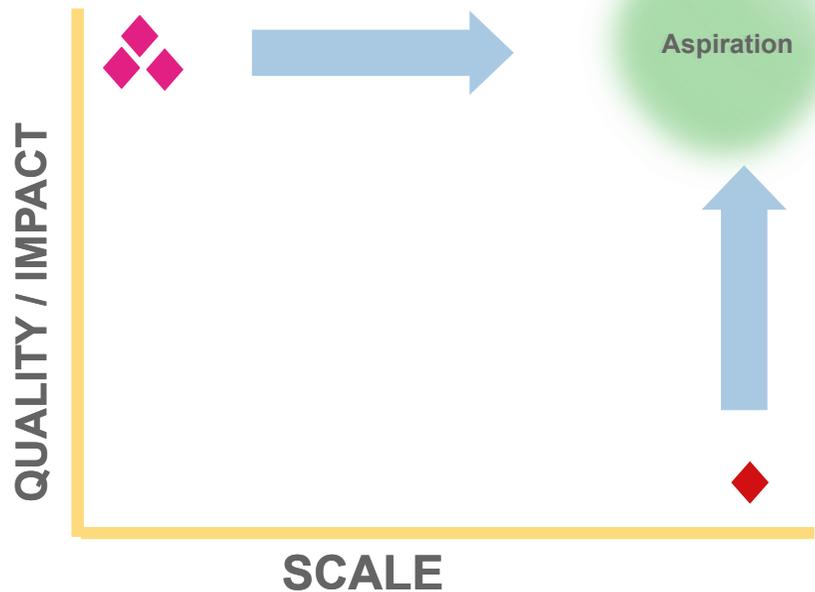
Our Mission:

**Build a future in which
learning through play
empowers all children to
become creative,
engaged, life-long learners**



Playful Parenting initiative

There is sufficient evidence about the **long term benefits of parenting interventions for children**. However, quality interventions don't go to scale and when they do, the quality is lost.



Through desk research and in consultation with global experts and implementers, we have identified some of the factors that limit the **scale up with quality** of parenting interventions:

1. **Insufficient funding** from international funders to support the scale up of proven concepts
2. Incipient understanding about the **core components** and required adaptations for playful parenting interventions
3. **Key public sector leaders** do not have the information they need to invest in and sustain playful parenting interventions

We seek to...



1. **Accelerate** the scale up of quality parenting interventions that support the use of play to promote children's holistic development and bolster primary caregiver's demand for playful learning
2. **Invest** in implementation science to better understand how messages, modalities, dosages, technology, and the impact of other aspects of implementation so that funders, policy makers and practitioners can make more informed decisions.
3. **Support** greater uptake and monitoring of best practice in large scale parenting interventions
4. **Equip** key sector leaders with the knowledge and skills that they need to integrate play-based parenting approaches across health, education and social protection systems.



Playful Parenting geographies and partners



At a Glance

The Playful Parenting Initiative's Implementing Partners



Sugira Muryango

- Boston College and FXB Rwanda in Rwanda
- 12-week home visiting program + 2 booster follow-ups
- All ubuduhe 1 families in 3 districts in Rwanda
- 14k caregivers, 10k children
- 2500 trained government community healthy volunteers (IZU)

Building Brains

- Save the Children + the MOH in Bhutan
- Monthly sessions + a mass media campaign
- All of Bhutan (3 phased approach)
- 85k caregivers and 56k children
- 600 health assistants trained in-service (and instantiation of pre-service training)

Care for Child Development

- UNICEF in Serbia and Zambia
- Home visits and sessions delivered across sectors at health and ECD centers
- 6 demo municipalities + 27 follow-up municipalities in Serbia and 2 districts in Zambia
- 110k caregivers and 110k children
- 6189 trained interventionists from health, education, and social protection sectors

Juega Conmigo

- ChildFund + 4 local implementing partners in Guatemala
- Monthly group sessions + supporting home visiting sessions
- 6 of Guate's 22 departments
- 30k families and 45k children
- 6000k community volunteers (madres guias) trained

Crianca Feliz

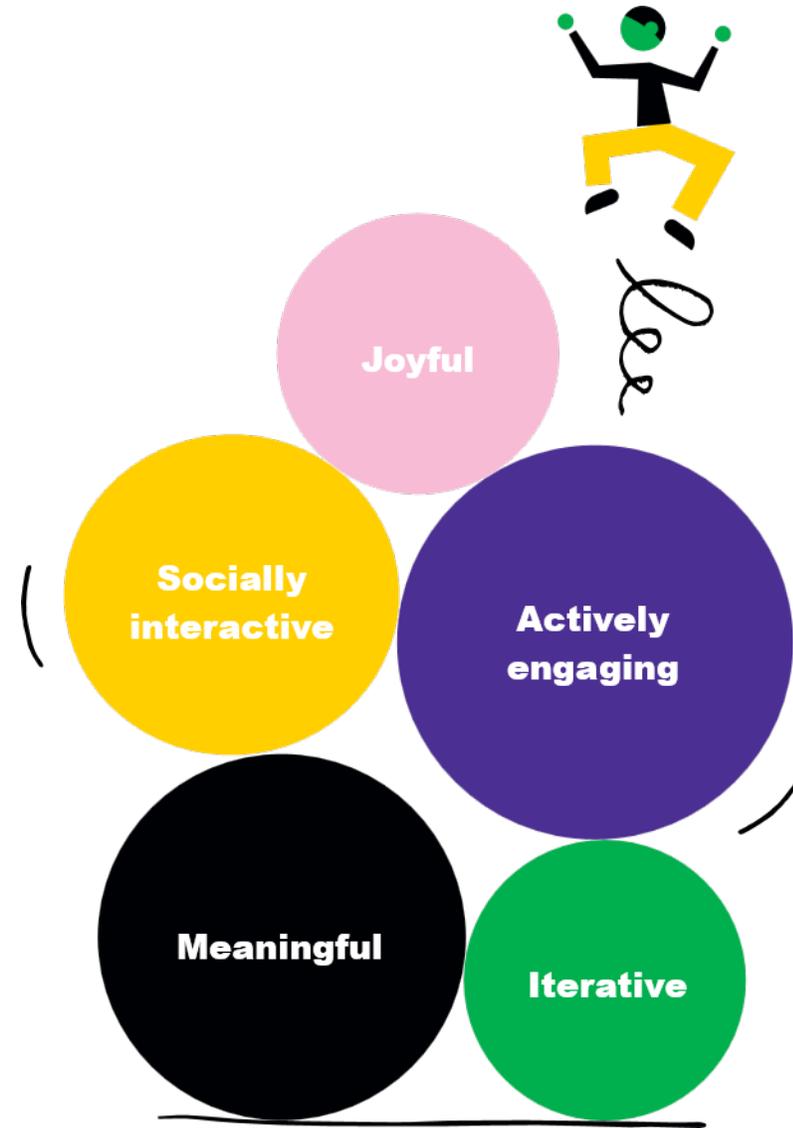
- Coming soon

Parents are children's first playmate and therefore have the opportunity to give them a headstart on learning through play that will last beyond the early years.



Children learn through play

Being playful conveys a joyful, engaging, creative quality to interaction, in which giving or expressing pleasure and providing meaningful social interactions are important.



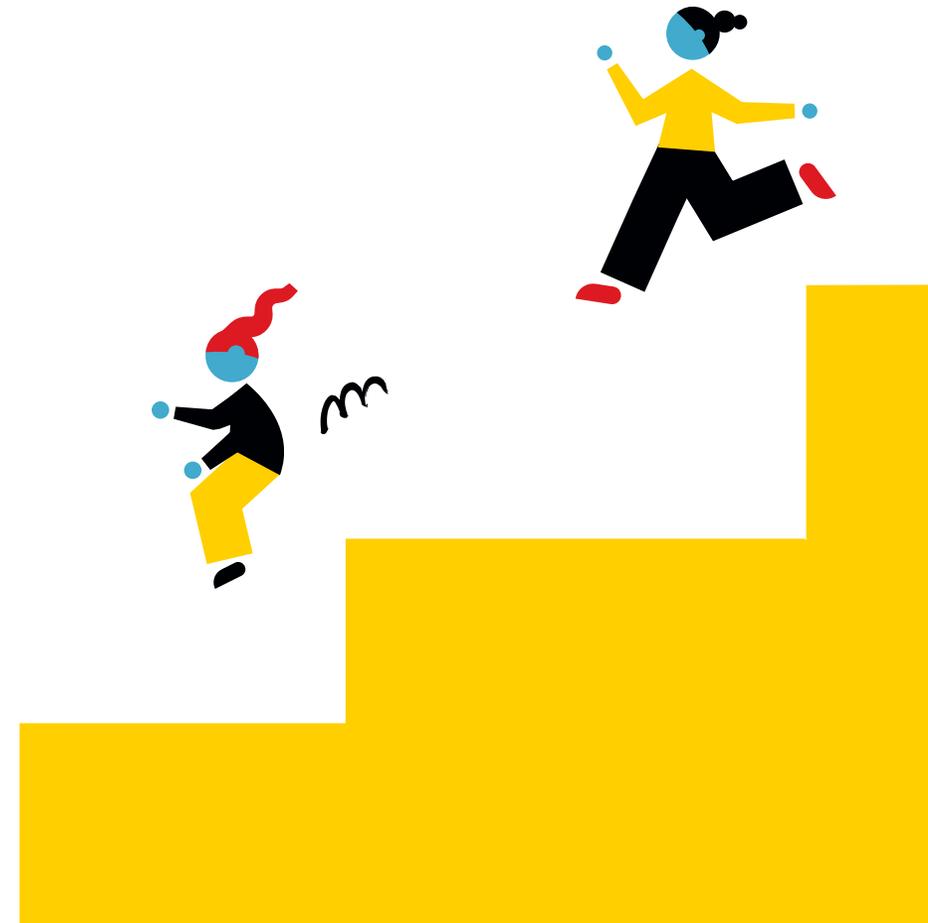
Strong bonds and secure attachment between caregivers and children





Coping and Resilience

Recent data collected across multiple countries from almost 13,000 parents, shows that most parents want to play with their children. Overall, 89% of parents responded that they enjoy playtime as much as their child does, 94% responded that play helps them get to know their child better, and 91% believe that play is good for their own wellbeing.



Parents and caregivers also benefit from engagement in play with their children

(Ray, 2008)



Caregiver mental health and well-being

The benefits of play extend to caregivers facing adversity, including mothers dealing with depression and families living in refugee settlements.

(Ray, 2008; Jackson, 2006)



There is an urgent need to consider the importance of caregiver-child playful interactions for children and caregivers between birth and three years of age.

Examples of caregiver-child play at this stage of development are all around us; in the supermarket, playground, and home. The benefits of these playful interactions to both children and caregivers are clear and compelling.





Caring for Caregivers: A Path Towards Playful Parenting

31st March 2021

Radhika Mitter, ECD Officer
UNICEF

E-mail: rmitter@unicef.org

Outline

- Why do we need to care for the caregiver?
- What is the CFC package?
- How is *Caring for the Caregiver* being tested and validated?



**Why do we need to care
for the caregiver?**

Caregivers emotional well-being is critical for child development



NURTURING CARE
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- Nurturing care strengthens children's ability to develop and learn
- Caregivers' emotional well-being impacts their ability to provide nurturing care and engage in **playful parenting**. Engaging in **playful interactions is also beneficial to the mental health and wellbeing** of both children and caregivers
- **Efforts to help children are unlikely to succeed unless they also support caregivers (Lancet, 2016)**

Innovation is needed to:

- Move away from child or caregiver approaches, **towards a caregiver + child + caregiving environment approaches**
- Empower caregivers with **emotional availability, knowledge, skills, access to resources** for caregiving
- Continued **focus on mental health across the life cycle** through multi-sectoral collaboration



**What is the
Caring for the Caregiver
package?**

Vision

Provide adequate counselling and parenting support services that improve:



- caregivers' emotional wellbeing



- caregiver-child interactions/relationship



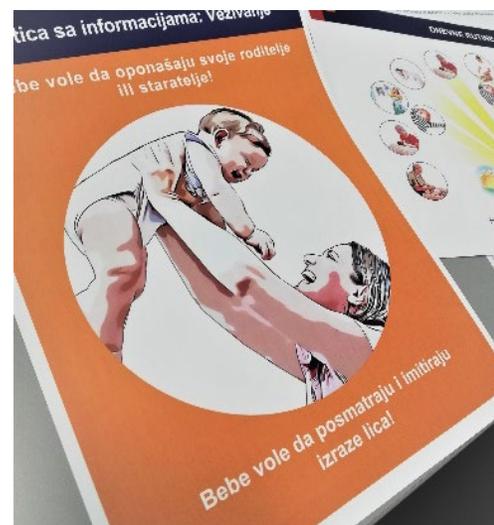
- child development outcomes

CFC Package: Key Design Principles

Training module focused on equipping front-line workers with counselling skills and practical job aids aimed at promoting caregivers' mental health and well-being

CFC is:

- **Preventative** (not treatment of mental health issues)
- **Low intensity** (3 days training, to be added to existing touch points/contact with families, such as home-visits, nutrition counselling groups)
- **Has a specific focus on adolescent caregivers/mothers**
- **Flexible** (to be adapted to local contexts)
- **To be integrated into existing** health, nutrition, protection and education services (complementing existing training parenting support packages)



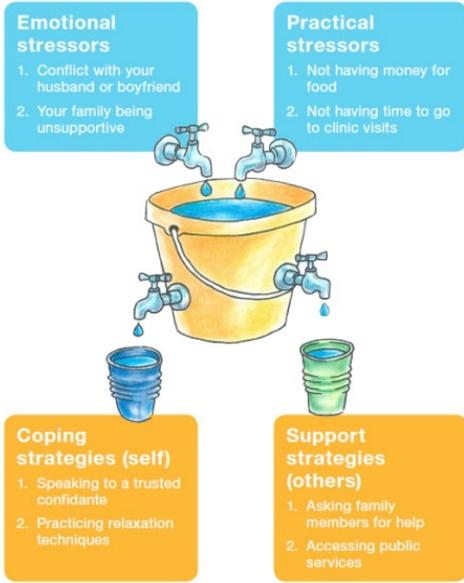
1. CFC Essential Skills

BEING A CONFIDANTE

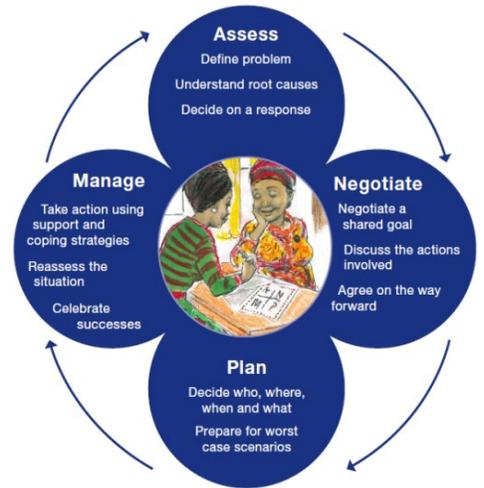


Caregivers need a trusted person to talk to

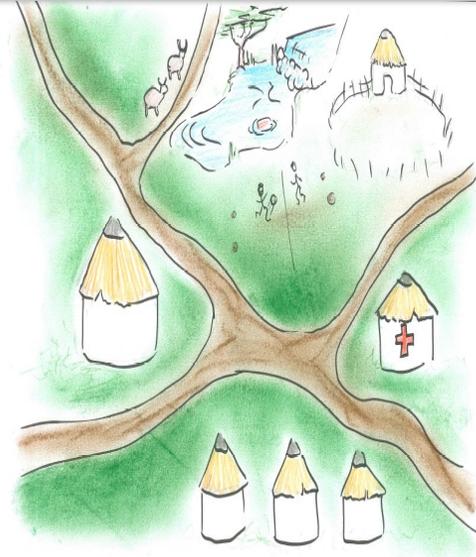
Relationship management



Stress management



Conflict management



Resource management

Essential skills are the building blocks of CFC

2. Recommendations

CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER 6-12 MONTHS



Key challenges - 6-12 months

There are many developmental changes for caregivers at this time: solid foods are introduced, baby spends more time awake and they become more mobile. These changes can impact on family life.

Baby needs caregivers to be close by to feel safe; they can become clingy and emotionally demanding, placing caregivers under increased pressure.

Caregivers may need to return to work and caregiver and baby can find separation difficult.

CFC puzzle

Connect with caregiver:

Worrying about providing for the baby can make it difficult to think positive thoughts or to find solutions to problems. Trusted confidantes can quieten worrying thoughts.



Support for caregiver:

Caregivers need to juggle the baby's needs and the needs of others including partners, other children, family and work obligations. Sharing caregiving activities can reduce stress and family conflict.



Connect with child:

Babies are highly sensitive to caregiver stress and react with disruption and crying. Nourishing activities counter the emotional intensity of caregiving increasing sensitivity and responsiveness.

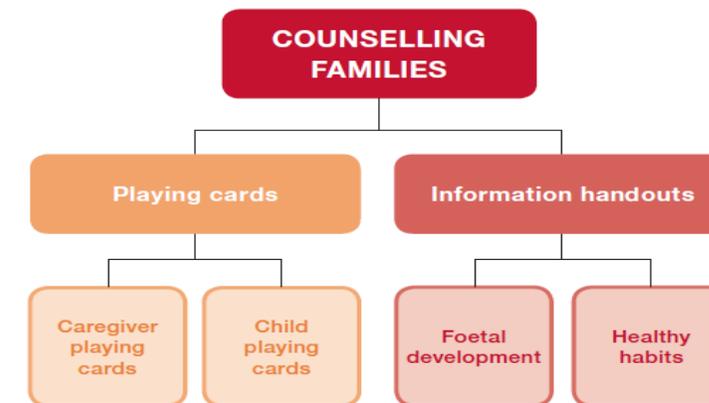
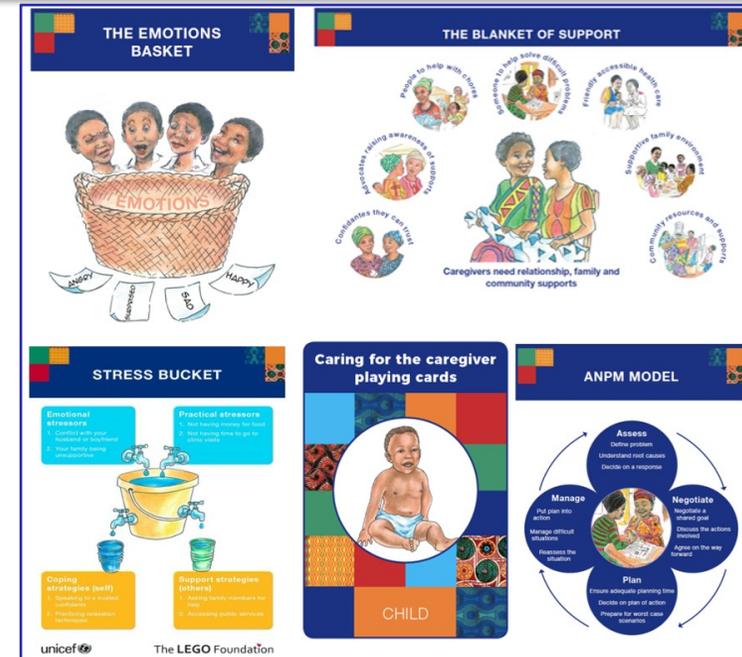
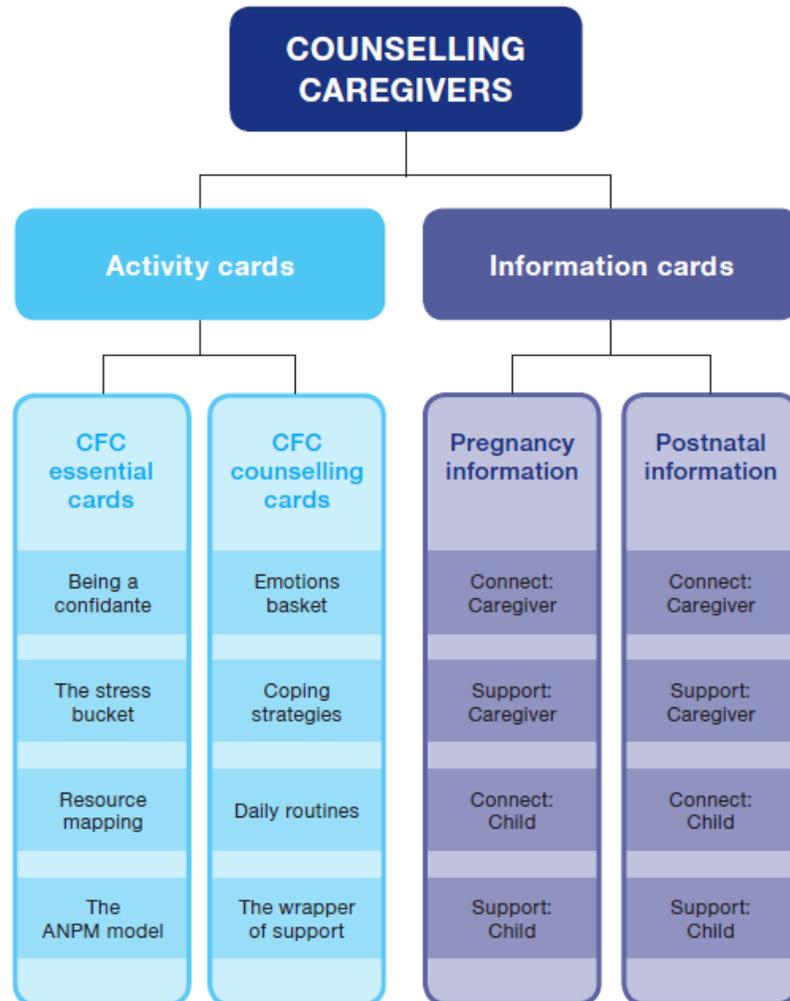


Support for child:

In family interaction, babies learn to express their needs and learn the social rules of relationships. Babies connect things they hear with actions they see. Family cohesion helps build their self-confidence.



3. Materials: Information and Playing Cards



**How is Caring for the
Caregiver being developed
and validated?**

CFC Development Process: 3 Phases

Phase I: CFC *prototype* development

Phase II: Validation, adaptation and finalization of CFC package (2020-2021)

Phase III: Pathways to scale and evidence (2021-onwards)

Global validation

CFC global validation research project

Training approximately 100-150 FLWs
Approximately 800 caregivers participating globally across 8 countries

Sierra Leone

Implementing alongside community health worker programmes (ANC, PNC, MIYCN)
Train 50 FLWs
200-300 participating caregivers

Brazil

Implementing alongside Programme of Support for Early Childhood Development (PADIN) delivered through home visiting
200-300 participating caregivers

Mali

Will only participate in training and training evaluation, will not be implementing

Zambia:

Implementing alongside ECD Playful Parenting programme (using CCD) delivered through home visiting
Delivered across 2 districts in Zambia
100 participating caregivers

Serbia:

Implementing alongside Playful Parenting through health, education and social welfare systems
Train 45 FLWs (15 from each system)
200-300 participating caregivers (100 recruited from each system)

Bhutan

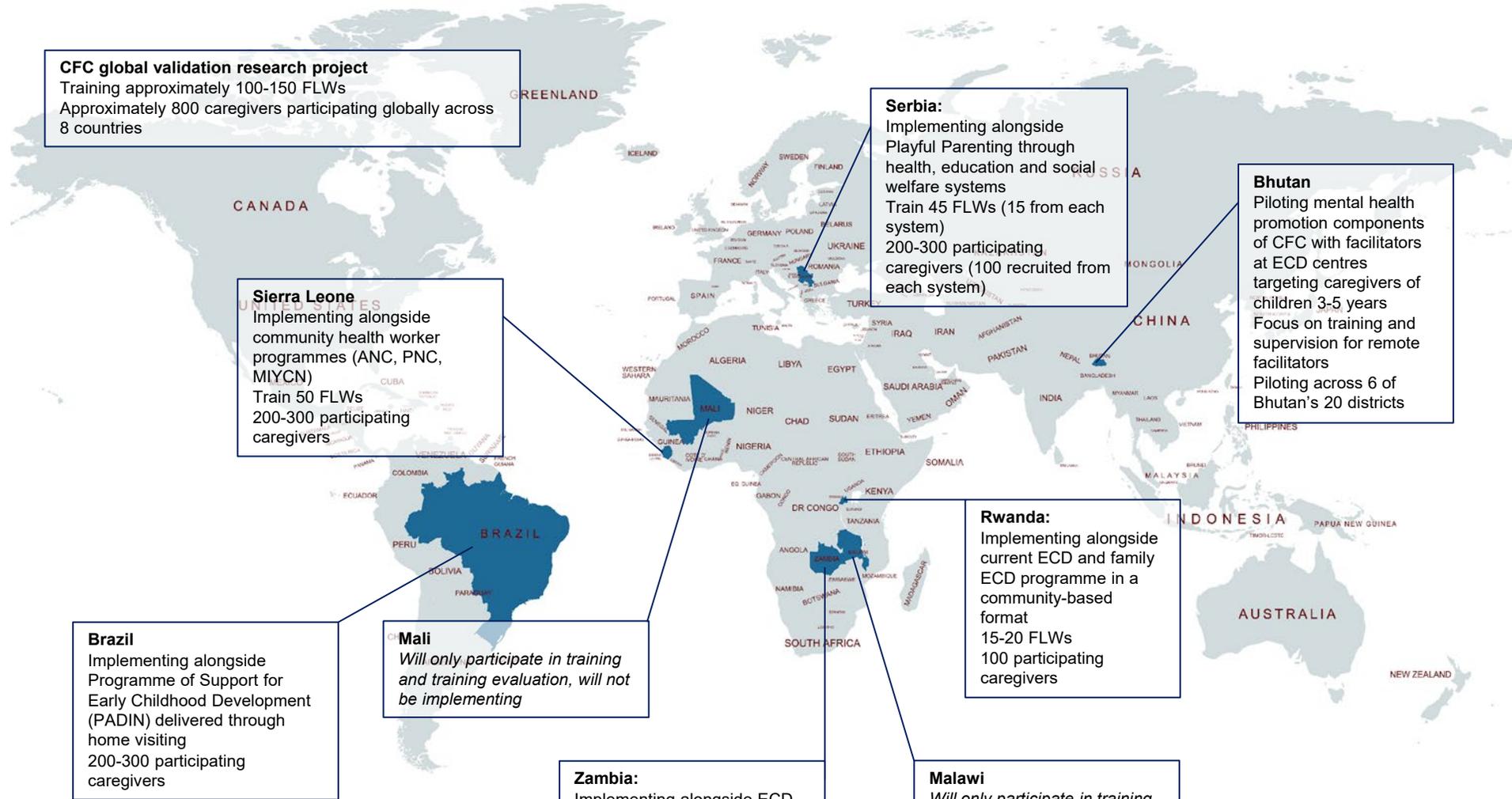
Piloting mental health promotion components of CFC with facilitators at ECD centres targeting caregivers of children 3-5 years
Focus on training and supervision for remote facilitators
Piloting across 6 of Bhutan's 20 districts

Rwanda:

Implementing alongside current ECD and family ECD programme in a community-based format
15-20 FLWs
100 participating caregivers

Malawi

Will only participate in training and training evaluation, will not be implementing



Caring for Caregivers during the COVID-19 Crisis

- **Increased demand** for mental health support
- **CFC during Covid-19 Guide** created to support countries' communications and programming efforts. It includes:
 - Evidence-based **messages, practical guidance, case studies** and **resources**
 - Highlighting **gender, play and adolescent caregivers**



unicef The LEGO Foundation 

Key messages on play:

- Playing and talking to children during your daily routines can reassure children and strengthen the caregiver-child relationship
- During very stressful times, setting a dedicated time for playful interaction with children helps children cope and can lighten the mood in the family

Thank You

Find more information here:

- [CFC Prototype Package](#)
- [Caring for Caregivers during the COVID-19 Crisis](#)

**Playful Parenting
Caring for the Caregivers
Serbia Experience**

Story line



- **Country Context**
- **Theory of Change:**
 - *Connection between play and emotional well-being*
 - *Responsive orbits around parents/caregivers build responsive parenting*
- **Key Learnings from CFC implementation**

SERBIA

Background/Context:

Overall Context

- *Scaling up Playful Parenting* – LEGO Foundation and UNICEF Partnership
- *Play and Caring for the Caregivers* – puzzles building family resilience and quality childcare

Background information

The latest MICS data (2019) underlines persistent problems in parental practices and system failure in overcoming the inequalities at an early age:



- ❑ **Persisting inequalities** - Only 48% of children living in the poorest quintile have 3 or more books at home, compared to 90% of children from the wealthiest quintile.
- ❑ **Persisting violent disciplining**, including physical punishment usage with 1/3 children age between 2 – 4 years
- ❑ **Gender inequality in parenting**, 60% of preschool-age children, grow up without fathers` involvement in play and learning activities
- ❑ **61% of children attend early childhood education (36-59 months)**, and 46% of children living in rural areas

At the same time, there is a widespread network of health services, including home-visit nurses and pediatrician on the primary level of a health system with characteristics:

- ❑ Medical approach – prioritizing care of physical health
- ❑ Child-centered approach, neglecting parental support and investment on parenting competencies
- ❑ One size fits all approach, neglecting the power of culturally competent practices

Key learnings/feedback from FLWs after CFC training:

- A new **deeper level of understanding of vulnerability**, stigma and deprivation
- **Understanding of barriers** to sensitive, supportive and positive parenting from the parents' perspective.
- Highlighted caregivers' strengths
- CFC as **unique experience for some caregivers**
- From **parents' educators to collaborative partner with parents** (*The „Blanket of Support“*)



Key learnings/feedback from FLWs after CFC training:

- Support for parents also should be about **relationship and connection**
- Supported parents can provide provide **comfort, connection, emotional security, stimulation and learning through playful child-parent interaction.**
- **Prevention of harsh parenting** and violent disciplining
- Children always want **their parents to be healthy and able to play with them**



Home visitor nurse- CFC in practice

- Role of HVN in Serbia
- Friend of family
- Support
- „Give man a fish and you feed him for a day...”
- Peer support
- **Play = Child and Family Wellbeing**



Public health center
Novi Sad, Serbia

CFC program in Shelter for Mothers and Newborns

- ❑ Supporters and promotes responsive, playful parenting
- ❑ Stressful situations and Parental capacities
- ❑ Mental health and wellbeing of parents/caregivers
- ❑ Focus on the relation based on trust
- ❑ Practical tool (communicating well with families/parents/caregivers, creates a safe environment to talk about emotions)



Questions and Answers

Thank you for participating!



Let's take care of each other

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