

Learning Session Title: Reaching caregivers of children aged 0-3 years with support to enable them practice responsive caregiving and provide opportunities for early learning.

Theme: Empowering parents, caregivers, and communities - Evidence based experience.

The period from pregnancy to age three is the foundation for health, well-being, learning and productivity throughout a person's whole life, and has an impact on the health and well-being of the next generation¹, yet 250 million children globally are not meeting their developmental potential².

The early years present a unique window of opportunity to address inequality and reduce early disadvantage; as it can mitigate risks that prevent girls and boys from reaching their developmental potential.

With each year's passing, the brain's plasticity and capacity for changes decreases³. Without such attention, the disadvantages and adversity experienced in early childhood will continue to compound with time, becoming both more expensive and more difficult to remediate later in life⁴. In humanitarian contexts, early interventions are even more crucial as children are more likely to be exposed to adverse childhood experiences.

The Nurturing Care Framework⁵ provides emerging global consensus toward a holistic view of child development supported by multi-sector action, yet there is a gap in understanding around how best to operationalize such a complex framework so that all children receive appropriate support across all components of the framework i.e. good health, adequate nutrition, safety and security, responsive caregiving and opportunities for early learning. There is a lack of systemic and at scale interventions to build brains via early stimulation and responsive care.

Save the Children and Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) support operationalization of the Nurturing Care Framework by providing technical support through training, mentorship, and supportive supervision to Health care providers (HCPs) and Community Health Workers who reach caregivers of children aged zero to three years old with messaging on early stimulation and responsive caregiving. The implementers are trained and deliver interventions using 1). the Care for Child Development (CCD); an evidence based package developed by UNICEF in supporting caregivers of children 0-3 years on play and communication practices; 2). Building Brains (BB) package, an evidence based package developed by Save the Children which targets caregivers of children 0-3 years on responsive caregiving and early stimulation. The interventions for both packages are delivered using different modalities (i) 1:1 counseling, (ii) Group session (health talks), (iii) Play corners

¹ Black MM, Walker SP, Fernald LCH, et al. Early childhood development coming of age: science through the life course. *Lancet*. 2017;389(10064):77–90.

² Grantham-McGregor et al., *Lancet* 2007

³ Nurturing Care Framework

⁴ Heckman, J. J. (2004). *The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children*

⁵ <http://nurturing-care.org/>

equipped with locally made, age appropriate play materials, (iv) Home visits by CHWs (Monthly visit to HHs with children U3. The interventions are integrated into different service delivery platforms - such as health, nutrition, education, child protection, social protection and livelihoods - to reach every girl and boy. This is in partnership with government structures at various levels (National to the village level). The packages have been adapted here in Africa for different contexts with local evidence available to share.

A half a day learning event will provide opportunity to share practical experience with evidence on what has been done to date in the region. It will involve presentations, discussions, posters, and practical activities. Specifically, the learning event will involve:

- Share the approach - The participants will be oriented on the CCD and BB package's content including approach, activities, entry points and dosage. Participants will get to observe counseling sessions in practice. Participants will also view different tools used in the session (Counseling Cards, Play cards and monitoring tools etc).
- Share evidence - participants will get to understand evaluation and research studies results on the CCD and BB packages, from different contexts including development and emergency settings; showing what worked well or did not and share recommendations to inform future programming.
- Experience from the field - to hear from the implementers on the ground, perceived benefits and challenges from beneficiaries.

The learning event audience and participants are expected to be;

- Various stakeholders (Governments, NGOs, CSOs and Private Sectors) with interest in implementation of responsive caregiving and early learning to caregivers and children 0-3 years. Also to build relationships and explore areas for cross-learning and collaboration.
- Funders; We want to showcase to prospective funders the excellent work being done in the field, evidence based impact and the need to continue investing to support caregivers support their children to reach full potential in life.

Learning Event Agenda

Time	Activity	Presenter
8.30 - 9.00	Gallery walk to view Responsive Caregiving and Early stimulation materials	EGPAF and Save the Children
9:00 - 9:15	Introductions	All
9:15 - 10:15	Share approaches Participants to visit two prepared stations to learn about packages, sessions, mode of delivery and dosage. View demonstrations of sessions	Josie and Naike CHW/Community Worker
10:15 - 11:15	Country Experiences presentations Hear from implementers from field	Naike Chawachi and John Tobongo
	Work with Government on system strengthening	Government from Tabora and Songwe regions
11:15 - 11:45	Share evidence Country and/or regional evidence on the packages	Elfrida and Josie
11:45 - 12:00	Discussion and Closing	Roland