

The Mothers' Union

Worldwide Parenting Programme

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Date

Aims

Formal aims (MU logframe)

- “To encourage parents in their role and increase the stability of family life.”
- “To equip communities to extend their parenting skills, build relationships and contribute to the stability of family life in society.”

Practitioners’ aims

- Improve quality of lives by improving family relationships
- Encourage talk between parents and children
- Influence next generation of men through their mothers

Key principle: **participatory learning**

- Facilitators empower groups to find their own solutions to problems
- Must trust groups to come to appropriate solutions

Structure of WPP

- Potential sites identified by MU at national and diocese level
- WPP offered to community leaders (formal and informal)
- MU recruit group of parents (25-30) who select facilitator
- Facilitator receives 1 week training in Kampala
 - course and accommodation paid by MU
- Group meets weekly for 8-12 weeks
 - no payment, facilitation voluntary
- Content agreed by group in early sessions
- After 12 weeks most groups agree to continue
 - mutually supportive group
 - some form savings groups
- Some continue with MU Family Life Programme (3-4 years)
 - intended to improve family life
- New groups often formed in community

Facilitator training

5 days training for 15-30 facilitators

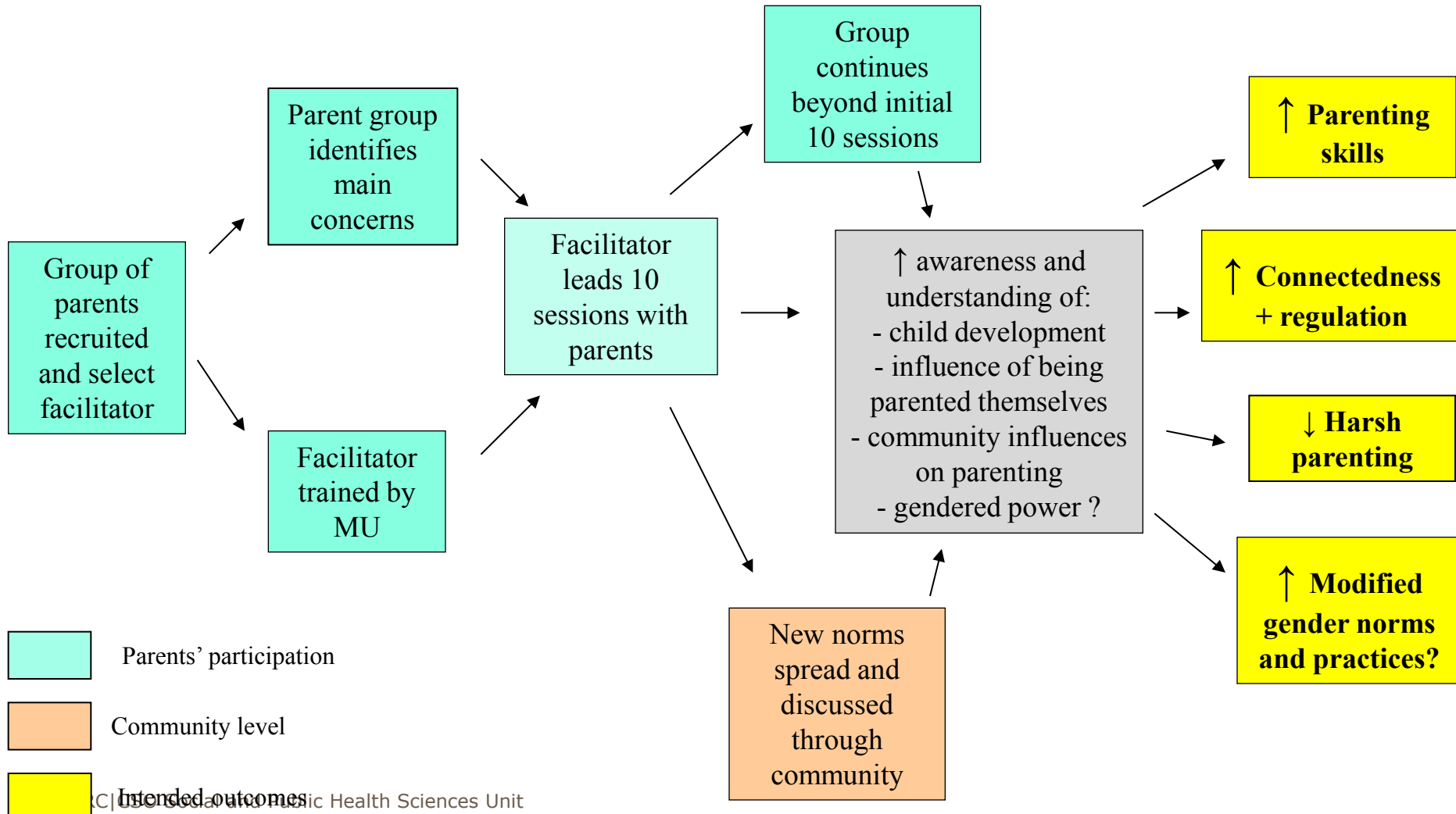
MU manual about process of facilitation

1. Group forming
2. Parents and children
3. Parenting groups and children
4. Content of parenting group sessions
 - issues parents raise and seeking further information
5. Groups and how they work
6. Communicating in groups
7. How adults learn in groups
8. Facilitating groups
9. Handling sensitive issues and difference
10. Adjusting resources and closing the group.

Content of programme

- Largely decided according to group's concerns, within overall aims
- However, all groups tend to cover:
 - stages in family life and child development
 - children's needs at different stages
 - parents' reflections on influences in their own childhood and how this affects their own parenting
 - community influences on parenting
 - discipline and Children's Rights are common themes
- Issues raised by groups mainly on general development:
 - poverty and income generation
 - health
- GBV very rarely raised: shameful
 - however, increasing awareness and possibility to discuss

Possible intended logic of MU WPP



Perceived benefits

By practitioners

- Shift in attitudes from authoritarian to authoritative parenting
 - Parents initially negative about encouraging talk with children
 - but parents recognised children of WPP parents *better* behaved with adults than others
- Where gender roles discussed, big change in gender norms

By participants

- Discussing problems together; social relationships and mutual support
- More open discussion between parents and children
- Collective support for decisions on children
- Savings through savings group
- Ideas for income generation
- Learning crafts
- Nutrition and hygiene education

Unresolved issues (1)

- Which parents are recruited?
 - most innovative, most unsure?
- Gender
 - > 80% women participants
 - men initially hostile to WPP but come to approve
 - unclear how widely gender norms are challenged
- How participatory?
 - facilitators control discussion, very didactic
 - unclear how far original choice of topics shaped by facilitator
 - unclear participation nec. for sustainability of groups
 - could facilitators be more prescriptive, e.g. about GBV?

Unresolved issues (2)

- Ability to discuss parenting issues
 - initially parents think family issues should be private
 - only discuss own children once groups well established
 - quicker in small villages
- Sustainability and scale
 - much unmet demand for WPP groups
 - limits to expansion are resources to train facilitators and their ability to run > 2 groups simultaneously
 - if established groups selected new facilitator would allow existing experienced facilitator to start new groups
- Impact beyond participants
 - does WPP influence community beyond its participants?
is there ripple effect?

Strengths of each programme

Mema kwa Jamii

- Uses opinion leaders
- Content fairly prescribed (also disadvantages)
- Messages heard and then reinforced through teaching
- Cascade approach could lead to wide replication

MU Worldwide Parenting Programme

- Uses existing structures
 - membership organisation
- Very low cost
- Participatory and builds on existing concerns, not imposed
- Appears to be self-sustaining

Thanks

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