



**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK FOR POSITIVE
PARENTING AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
(ECD) IN EGYPT**

July 2017

List of Acronyms

CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
C4D	Communication for Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EDHS	Egypt Demographic and Health Survey
FBOs	Faith-Based Organisations
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
HDI	Human Development Index
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
NCCM	National Council for Childhood and Motherhood
NPC	National Population Council
PHU	Primary Health Unit
SBCC	Social and Behavioural Change Communication
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEM	Social Ecological Model
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (Analysis)
UPI	University Pioneer Initiative
WB	World Bank

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Executive Summary

UNICEF, in coordination with the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), held a Stakeholders' Technical Consultation Workshop on Strategic Communication for Early Childhood Development (ECD) on 10 - 12 July 2017 in Cairo, Egypt.

The workshop was attended by different stakeholders including representatives from concerned ministries and national councils, NGOs, parenting experts, academia, private sector, media professionals, and UN agencies.

The workshop aimed to broaden the awareness of local stakeholders on the importance of strategic communication for ECD and to establish a participative process to design a common road map to use strategic communication to achieve the national ECD targets. The workshop also contributed to build understanding of the status, impact, role, and approaches of strategic communication for ECD, to facilitate collective design of related interventions with clear linkages to existing platforms, initiatives, and mechanisms at the national and sub-national level.

Participants came together to identify opportunities for strategic communication for ECD in Egypt in relation to the national vision and evidence-based dimensions of effective parenting as the basis for the design of strategic communication interventions.

The workshop participants identified the need to redefine the normative framework on **'positive parenting'** as instrumental to triggering social and behavioural change in support of ECD in all its components: nutrition, early stimulation, protection and health.

The platform of media (mass and social media) was selected to be at the centre of an interactive model dialoguing with existing platforms in the sphere of services, private sector, youth and/or cultural centres, and community based organizations.

Among the workshop outcomes 1) the collective will to establish a network of stakeholders committed to support strategic communication initiatives on positive parenting and ECD; 2) the need to identify an institutional coordination mechanisms to ensure sustainability; 3) the need to produced standards tools.

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT FOR THE WORKSHOP

This workshop followed two inter-ministerial consultation processes initiated in August 2016 where technical discussions were held amongst key stakeholders to generate recommendations for a long-term multi-sector ECD national strategy. Among the recommendations a clear need was identified to formulate a strategy for social and behaviour change which would articulate a common vision for the way forward for strategic communication to include advocacy for ECD and increased public awareness, positive parenting, social and community engagement and support.

In response to the request for collaboration received in 2016 from H.E Dr. Ghada Wali – Minister of Social Solidarity, UNICEF solicited the technical support of Dr. Pia Brito UNICEF Global Advisor on ECD with a mission to generate recommendations for a long-term multi-sector ECD strategy with articulated program models to be costed and implemented with quality at scale. The process of support included several important meetings and consultations with the Ministry of Education

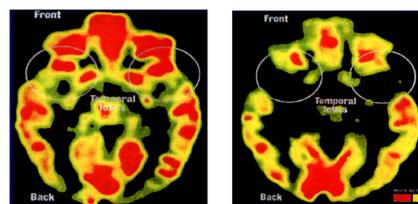
(MoE), Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS), relevant stakeholders and the World Bank (WB) staff and concluded with the two day workshop held in August 2016 with key ECD stakeholders to develop a strategy roadmap.

The Second Inter-Ministerial Workshop on ECD took place on April 2017, facilitated by UNICEF Egypt. The workshop was attended by key stakeholders on ECD including the MoE, Ministry of Health and Population (MoPH), MoSS, NCCM, National Population Council (NPC), technical experts, the WB and UNICEF. The workshop was designed to provide an update of progress since the August 2016 workshop, including a presentation of the proposed ECD model for Egypt, and an introductory briefing regarding the planned Stakeholders' Technical Consultation Workshop on Strategic Communication for ECD aimed to collectively contribute in designing a strategic communication vision to best serve children, parents and caregivers in Egypt.

The Strategic Communication for ECD Workshop began by providing an overview of the latest research on early brain development, the inclusion of ECD in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a briefing on the global multi-partner ECD initiative of which UNICEF is a central player. An overview of these introductory presentations is provided as follows.

1.1 Findings from Neuroscience and other Global Research Relevant to the National ECD Programme

Findings of recent research on brain-functioning has resulted in increased global attention on improving support to ensuring optimal early childhood development. The Lancet, one of the highest regarded research journals internationally, has established that specific caregiving practices during the first years of life influence how the brain is wired, influence the expression of genes in brain development and can have a marked impact on future functioning throughout life.¹ The studies show that responsive caregiving by both mothers and fathers during the early years, including emotional bonding, play-based responsive stimulation, proper nutrition, consistency and structure, results in the achievement of higher level intellectual skills, better school achievement and more positive pro-social behaviour or socialization skills.² Longitudinal studies (22 years after play-based psychosocial interventions) also demonstrate that early brain stimulation is not only important for primary school achievement, but has significant long-term impact on levels of higher education, employment and income.³



Scans of the brain showing the effect of positive early childhood stimulation (left) and stunted brain development (right) due to adverse early childhood experience. Source: Grantham-McGreggor Longitudinal Effects of Psychosocial Stimulation of Severely Malnourished Children, TMRI, Jamaica.

Against the background of neuroscience, it is becoming increasingly clear that young children across the world are not receiving the type of care and stimulation required to support optimal brain development. A recent review of the status of parenting practices conducted by UNICEF⁴ has shown

¹ Lancet ECD Series Booklet (2016), Advancing Early Childhood Development: from Science to Scale, December 16, 2016

² Britto, P. et al. (2015) A Systematic Review of Parenting Programmes for Young Children, UNICEF

³ McGreggor, G. (1994), Longitudinal Effects of Psychosocial Stimulation of Severely Malnourished Children, TMRI, Jamaica.

⁴ Britto, P et al. (2015) UNICEF

that less than half of the parents across the world engage in parenting behaviours that are critical for early childhood development. Globally, as much as 43% of all children (250 million) who are under the age of 5 in low and middle income countries are not achieving their developmental potential – a result of multiple adversities including poor health and nutrition, and lack of stimulating, nurturing, responsive, and safe environments.⁵ Data from the 2015 World Development Report published by the WB titled, “Mind, Society and Behaviour,” reveals that ECD is not only important for individual functioning, but also for national development and prevention of the cycle of poverty. The report demonstrates that countries reporting higher levels of engagement in cognitive-type caregiving activities are the same countries with significantly higher Human Development Indexes (HDI).

The conclusion of global research is that in countries where children are most exposed to poverty and related deprivation, and who require the greatest support to compensate for these developmental limitations, are receiving the lowest levels of nurturing care from their families. In most cases this is because primary caregivers do not have sufficient awareness of the importance of brain development in the earliest years or the required knowledge and skills to provide the necessary stimulation for optimal brain development.

1.2 ECD in the SDGs and Global Multi-Partners ECD Initiative

Acknowledging the risk undermining the achievement of national development indicators, ECD has for the first time been included as a specific goal in the global development agenda. Amongst the 17 SDGs agreed by UN member states and the development community, SDG #4 outlines the following goal:

“By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.”

ECD is part of the transformative agenda for 2030, making it an international priority for the 21st century. Global SDG targets in education (4.2); health (3.2); nutrition (2.2); and protection (16.2) address key outcomes to realize young children’s developmental potential. Addressing inequities early in life can convert a vicious cycle of inequality into a virtuous cycle. ECD is also a critical component of multiple global thematic strategic frameworks and partnerships, that will collectively contribute towards the SDG goals, such as Every Woman Ever Child, Global Partnership for Education, Scaling up Nutrition and End Violence Against Children Global Partnership. The inclusion of ECD in these frameworks presents opportunities for advocacy and technical agenda-setting as the frameworks can help to reveal shortcomings in national policy setting, planning, budgeting, programming and monitoring results for young children. Within the global frameworks designed to support the health, development and protection of children, mothers and families, one of the areas critical for strengthening are strategies that focus on improving knowledge and caregiving practices, demand for quality services and community engagement and addressing social norms.

1.3 Uptake of the Global Call To Action on ECD in Egypt

Egypt was one of the first 20 countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and was one of the initiator countries for the 1990 World Summit for Children. The political will as reflected in the Egyptian Constitution and the national plan “Vision (Sustainable Development Goals) 2030,” commit to enabling an environment where children will realize the full spectrum of their rights. The country has made significant progress in various social sectors yet children, especially the

⁵ Lancet ECD Series Booklet, Advancing Early Childhood Development: from Science to Scale, December 16, 2016

youngest ones (under 5 years old), are still suffering not only from multiple adversities – marked by poor health, lack of adequate nutrition and insufficiently stimulating, nurturing, responsive, and safe environments. In addition, the economic downturn during recent years has left many families in monetary poverty often adopting negative coping strategies putting children at a higher risk of neglect and exploitation.

Over the past two decades, Egypt has made good progress in interventions related to ECD, including progress in health services as well as establishment of a kindergarten department in the MoE guiding the scaling-up of quality, standards-based education for children aged 4-5 years old. This is in addition to the current efforts to develop a set of national strategies aiming for child and family wellbeing such as: 1) The National Strategy for Childhood & Motherhood, 2) The National Nutrition Strategy, 3) The National Population Strategy 2030 and most recently, 4) The National Strategy for Early Childhood Development,

However, much more needs to be done as many children from birth to 8 years old are falling short of their potential because of reasons beyond their control. This applies in particular to the most economically vulnerable and socially deprived children.

1.4 Development of an Integrated National ECD Model

To address the national challenges identified in ECD during the first inter-ministerial meeting on ECD in August 2016, in collaboration with UNICEF Headquarters and the UNICEF Egypt Country Office, the participants including the respective ministries (MoSS, NCCM, MoHP, MoE, MoP and MoF) jointly agreed upon the following four main pillars of action for the development of a national ECD programme:

1. Development of an integrated national ECD model(s) and scaling up of related services
2. Development of supportive ECD policies, legislation and financing
3. Enhancement of the ECD standards of facilities workforce (e.g. teachers, nurses, etc.)
4. Promotion of Positive Parenting

Drawing on developmental science and evidence based quality interventions combined in a strategic, meaningful manner to achieve holistic development for all children, including those with disabilities, the ECD Model for Co-Responsibility is based on two mutually reinforcing components: 1) promoting policies to stimulate female labour force participation; and 2) scaling up quality childcare services nationwide to enhance holistic child development. Enhancing the socio-economic status of women through family friendly workplaces and child focused social protection schemes will positively impact children’s developmental outcomes. The objective of the ECD model is to achieve two-generational outcomes that advance women’s economic empowerment while promoting successful developmental outcomes for children.

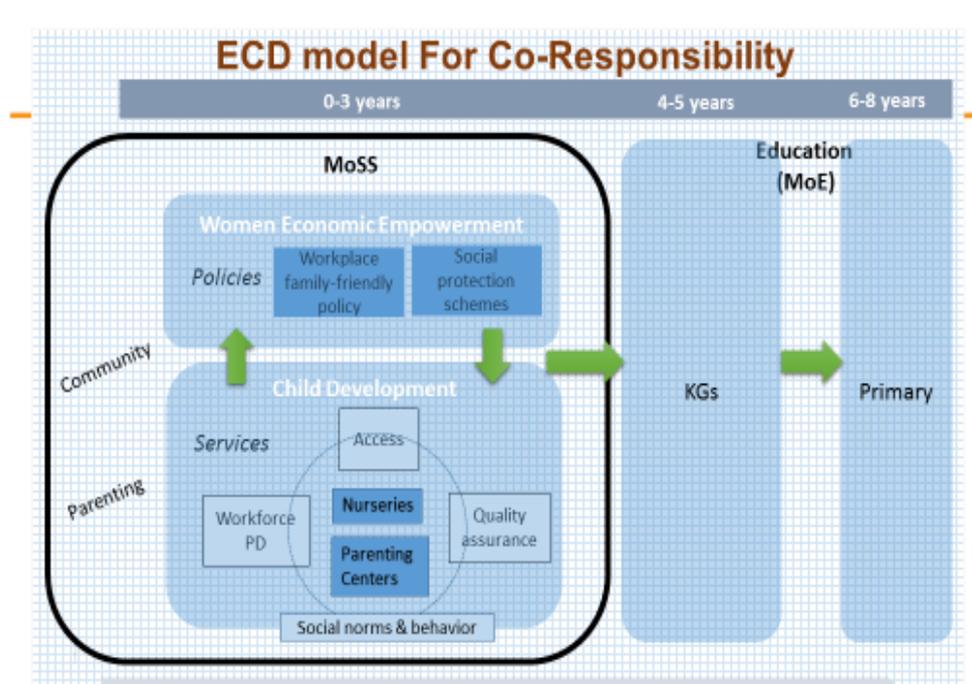


Figure SEQ Figure 1 ARABIC 1: ECD Model for Scaling up ECD services for children age 0-3

As presented in Figure 1, the model consists of two main components: Women’s Economic Empowerment and Child Development. The first component response of Women’s Economic Empowerment addresses policy issues that can contribute to creating an enabling environment for empowerment of women and accessibility for childcare services. The second component response of Child Development addresses childcare service delivery to improve its quality, expand its coverage nationwide and enhance the demand for quality services. The outcomes of both components are expected to mutually and positively influence each other.

The Co-Responsibility Model is designed to work at both the grass root and policy levels with full engagement of all stakeholders including civil society, as the main agent of change. The model promotes societal co-responsibility for childcare that is empowering for women. This will entail the redistribution of childcare responsibilities and roles for the state, employers, childcare centres, and parents.

The model follows six strategies for supporting children’s development spanning direct service to children themselves up to the development of a quality assurance system. The strategies will be used in combination to achieve the envisioned results. The specific strategies are:

- Direct service delivery to children
- Workforce professional development
- Empowering women through social protection policies and providing job opportunities and promoting co-parenting
- **Parents and family caregivers’ education and support**
- **Building public awareness and enhancing community demand**
- Building a comprehensive quality assurance system including developing national quality standards and sound MIS and M&E Systems.

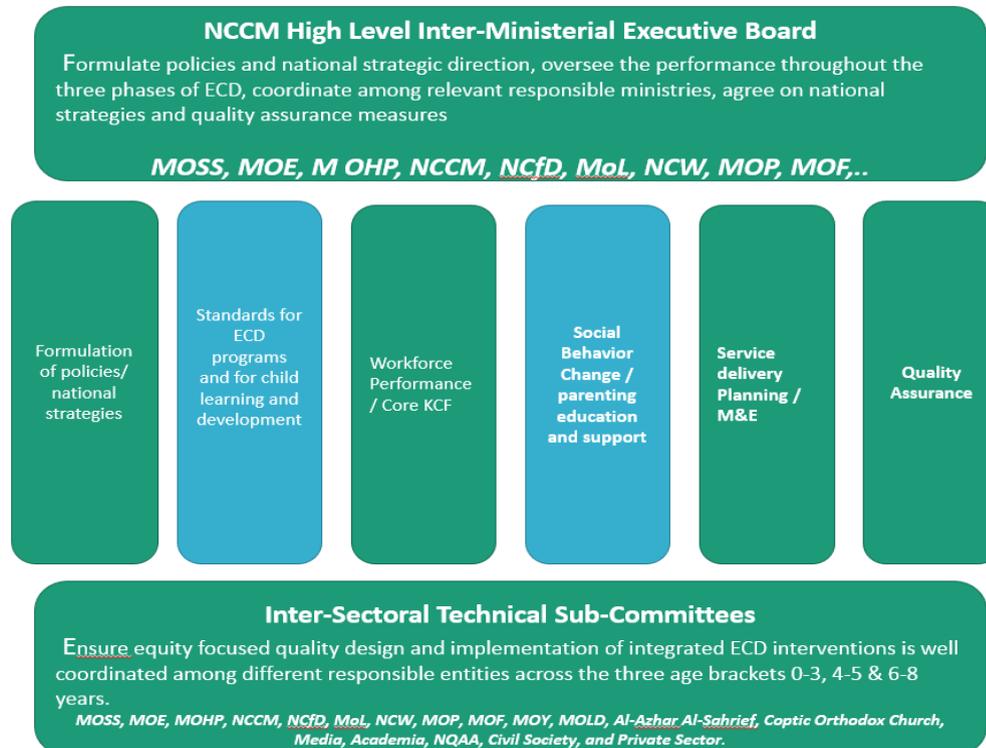
Though the model focus on children age 0-3 (nurseries), it is important to link to and complement ECD services for children age 4-5 (pre-primary) and 6-8 (primary) to maximize the benefit for children. An overall multifaceted strategy to frame all ECD efforts has to be in place to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of ECD programmes. This requires good governance of and coordination among different sectors providing services for children age 0-8 years.

The participating ministries jointly agreed upon four main pillars of action for the development of a national ECD programme:

- Development of an integrated national ECD model (s) and scaling up of related services
- Development of supportive ECD policies, legislation and financing

- Enhancement of the ECD standards of facilities workforce (e.g. teachers, nurses, etc.)
- **Promotion of Positive Parenting**

The following diagram provides an overview of the various components of the national ECD Model agreed in principle by the nine Ministries that have committed support to the collaborative initiative:



2.0 COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (C4D) OR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

During the opening session of the workshop, Dr. Maissa Shawky, Deputy Minister of Health and Population and Head of NCCM, explained that the rationale for the Strategic Communication workshop was to collectively design a roadmap to achieve the components of the national ECD model addressing parents and family caregivers’ education and support and building public awareness and enhancing community demand.

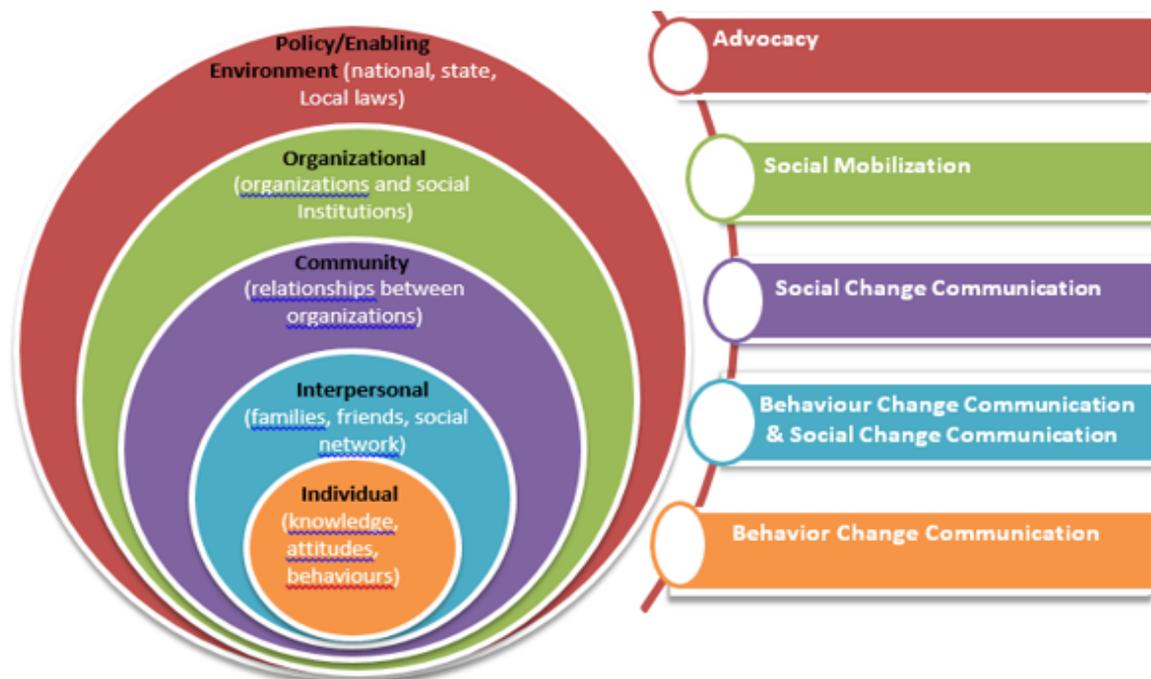
As part of the orientation session on strategic communication Dr. Kerida McDonald, Senior Advisor in C4D from UNICEF headquarters, explained the discipline of C4D and presented the conceptual framework and key principles used to design strategies for behaviour and social change:

“Communication lies at the heart of sustainable development and C4D/ Strategic Communication is one of the most empowering ways of improving health, nutrition, protection, early learning and other key social outcomes for children and their families.”

The workshop adopted UNICEF’s C4D definition *“a systematic, planned and evidence-based strategic process to promote positive and measurable individual behaviour and social change that is an*

integral part of development programmes, policy advocacy and humanitarian work”⁶ and the workshop participatory processes used as key reference the theoretical model known as, the Social Ecological Model (SEM) for Social and Behavioural Change.

For any social and behaviour change initiative to be effective and sustainable, it must start with behavioural analysis and simultaneously address change at all levels. The model provides a framework for analysis and action at various levels of change (individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, policy/enabling environment), outlines the type of stakeholders and influencers involved at each level and suggests the types of C4D approaches appropriate at each specific level: advocacy, social mobilization, social change communication, and behavioural change communication.



Bronfenbrenner, 1971

C4D is a cross-cutting strategy that uses research and consultative processes to promote human rights, mobilize leadership and societies, influence attitudes and support the behaviours of those who have an impact on the well-being of children, women, their families and communities across all stages of the lifecycle.

C4D expects to bring about change and social transformation, including changes within existing cultural dynamics, to enable and support the sustainability of all programme outcomes. In particular, C4D is facilitating enabling environments that:

- Create spaces for plurality of voices and promote positive narratives of communities;
- Encourage listening, dialogue and debate;
- Ensure the active and meaningful participation of children and women;

⁶ Position Paper Communication for Development (C4D) Realizing Strategic Shifts and Accelerating Results for Children - Policy and Practice, UNICEF New York, April 2009

- Reflect the principles of inclusion, self-determination, participation and respect by ensuring that marginalized and vulnerable groups (including children with disabilities) are prioritized and given visibility and voice;
- Link community perspectives and voices with sub-national and national policy dialogue;
- Start early and address the whole child — including the cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual aspects in addition to survival and physical development;
- Ensure that children are considered as agents of change and as a primary audience, starting from the early childhood years;
- Build the self-esteem and confidence of care providers and children.

3.0 SITUATION ANALYSIS OF ECD AND PARENTING IN EGYPT

Having provided an overview of the global context of ECD, the definition of C4D and the rationale for focus on strategic communication, the workshop participants were provided a general overview of the Situation Analysis of ECD and parenting in Egypt.

3.1 Situation Analysis of the Context of ECD in Egypt

With a population of over 93 million, children in Egypt comprise 38% of the total population, 28% of the population suffers from extreme poverty, and 31% of adults suffer from unemployment. According to data from the 2014 Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) one third of Egyptian children under age 8 are living in poverty.⁷ The current rate of population growth (ie. average 2% increase annually) far exceeds the growth in access to social services, further exacerbated by limited increase in resources for social sector interventions. This creates a context for children who are facing multidimensional poverty: malnutrition, violence, poor education, engagement in labour and limited access to nurseries and primary education. Due to the increasing population growth, about 1.5 to 2 million children enter the education system each year, making it difficult to maintain the current enrolment ratios for education.

Forty four percent (44%) of children 4-5 years old are not attending any form of Early Childhood Education (ECE); there is a rise in the double burden of malnutrition, with stunting (21% among children under 5) co-existing with high and rising obesity rates (15 % of children under-5 are overweight); there has been a progressive decline of exclusive breastfeeding rates through a child's fifth month after birth (13 % in 2014); and high levels of anaemia (27 % of children under-5).

Physical and emotional punishment of children by parents and caregivers is deeply entrenched in Egyptian culture, and is often used as a “legitimate” disciplinary tool. The 2014 EDHS 2014 showed that 93% of children aged 1-14 have been exposed to violent disciplinary practices. 79% of children in the poorest wealth quintile of the population were exposed to physical disciplinary practices, compared with 71% of children in the richest quintile, showing the universality of the practice. Severe physical punishment is significantly more widespread in rural areas than in urban settings.

On a positive note, a regional research published by UN Women in 2017⁸ showed that the majority of Egyptian parents (58 per cent) thought that physical punishment is not needed for raising their children. The NCCM UNICEF 2015 study also indicated that parents were open to alternative forms of discipline.

The role of fathers in Egypt is notably lacking with fathers contributing 6 times less than mothers in the caregiving of their children. According to EDHS 2014, 95.5% of preschool teachers are females, and mothers contribute 6 times more than fathers in the caregiving of their children. Thus, females

⁷ Egypt's Demographic and Health Survey (2014). Unless otherwise noted, all data in this section is from the EDHS 2014.

⁸ Family Conditions Survey(2009). Information and Decision Support Centre, Egypt

and mothers are the main caregivers for children, which illustrates the imbalance in the situation of caregiving that potentially has adverse effects on children's development.

Numerous barriers prevent parents from engaging more fully with infants and young children. Barriers may be due to their lack of knowledge about child development or lack of awareness of certain positive parenting practices, such as the importance of verbal interaction with children. Parents might also implicitly believe that intelligence is fixed and immutable, which undermines the motivation to change. Parents might be held back by mental models based on traditional beliefs that some practices can be harmful to the child or by a fear of ridicule for violating a social norm against talking to infants.⁹

According to the UN Women study 'Understanding Masculinities (International Men and Gender Equality Survey – IMAGES Middle East and North Africa (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine)', in spite of the gap in who provides daily caregiving, men would like to do more. While 60 % of men said they spend too little time with their children because of work, nearly half also participate in some aspects of childcare. Almost half of the men and women reported being in favour of a paid parental leave for fathers. Where daily caregiving is concerned, fewer than 10 per cent of men and 20 per cent of women felt that there is shame in men taking care of children or contributing to housework. Nevertheless, the view held by the vast majority of men and women, that changing diapers, bathing, and feeding children should be a woman's responsibility, is reflected in daily life. While infant and toddler care is the preserve of women, more than two-fifths of men reported ever having fed or supervised their children. However, more than three-quarters of these men reported that while they have lent a hand, their wives do most of this work. In contrast, almost three-quarters of men reported playing with their children, an activity which they largely shared with their wives. Almost two-thirds of men reported that they spend too little time with their children, due to work or the search for it. Additionally, while almost two-thirds of women saw their husbands' role in childrearing as primarily that of a financial provider, only 40 per cent of men agreed with this assessment. This suggests that men desire involvement beyond breadwinning, more so than women seem to acknowledge¹⁰.

3.2 Analysis of Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats (SWOT Analysis)

After presentations with data and statistics regarding the status of young children and parenting in Egypt, the workshop participants were organized in groups to conduct their own SWOT analysis to understand parenting dynamics, strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats within in Egypt, in relation to 1) various parent/population groups and 2) various existing programmes and potential delivery platforms for strategic communication.

Divided in four groups a total of 40 participants collectively identified the behavioural and social barriers, gaps and opportunities across key domains of parenting in relation to existing social and behavioural change platforms and different groups of parents. The group of parents taken into consideration were:

- a) Parents with infants (first 1,000 days);
- b) Parents of nursery school-age children;
- c) Low-income parents with malnourished children;
- d) Parents of infants and young children in humanitarian settings;
- e) Fathers & gender issues in parenting;
- f) Adolescent parents;

⁹ World Development Report (2015): Mind, Society, and Behaviour, Chapter 5 Early Childhood Development, p.105

¹⁰El Fiki, et. Al. (2017) Understanding Masculinities (International Men and Gender Equality Survey – IMAGES Middle East and North Africa, UN Women, Prumondo and Zanaty Foundation.

g) Parents of children with disabilities.

The existing social and behavioural change potential platforms analysed in terms of their strengths, weaknesses and opportunities were:

- a) Government service delivery centres (Primary Health Care Units, Family Clubs, Nutrition Outreach Centres, Social Policy Services, Nurseries, Kindergartens, etc.).
- b) Faith based organizations and other community networks
- c) Youth platforms (University Pioneers Initiative, Cultural Centres, etc.);

3.3 Behavioural and Sociocultural Barriers

Through the SWOT analysis, the following were identified as some of the behavioural and sociocultural barriers that can potentially negatively impact the child full development in Egypt:

- Males in Egypt usually have a strong parental sentiment fostered by norms of appreciating male responsibility and general family values. However, cultural dynamics prevent fathers from being fully involved in the parenting process, framing it within the mother's responsibility. For example, the current legislations on divorce adds additional strains on fathers, for instance; low levels of awareness on the importance of the father's role and harsh economic conditions forcing the father to work longer hours with less time to spend with the family; medical awareness campaigns, nutrition tips and parenting guidance usually target mothers, hence re-enforcing the concept that fathers are not responsible for children's care and health. Overall childcare and child discipline are largely considered women's work. In spite of the gap in who does the daily caregiving, men would like to do more.
- Many children in Egypt are subjected to violence at the hands of those who are supposed to protect and nurture them. This violence, some of it extreme, is too often condoned and normalized by the adult's inflicting the violence and even by children themselves. Violence is often at least tolerated as a way to instil discipline, to 'teach' children appropriate behaviour, to exploit them or to reinforce power relations. Violence against children is often hidden from view because it is considered a source of shame that neither the adult doing violence nor the victim are willing to reveal. The reality for most girls and boys who are exposed to violence is one of isolation, loneliness and fear. Many children do not know where to turn for help, particularly when the person harming them is a parent, teacher or anyone else who should be protecting them.
- Traditionally, malnutrition has been associated with severe acute undernutrition, but as such cases become rarer there tends to be a general feeling that malnutrition is a 'thing of the past'. Nutrition is generally neglected. For example a large majority of adult women in Egypt are overweight or obese but there is very limited attention and public discussion of these problems.
- Diet supplementation with sugar water for infants usually begins very early, and the gradual introduction of other foods generally begins soon after 40 days of age. Mixed formula and breastfeeding is commonly perceived to increase the nutritional quality of the child's diet. Weaning often occurs early due to a variety of factors including maternal illness, desire for another pregnancy, and perceptions that breast milk may be inadequate. Weaning is usually perceived to be a difficult and dangerous transition.

- With a patriarchal society where the traditional family model predominates, Egypt is characterized by strong gender-based disparities in areas of reproductive health, economic functioning, and overall empowerment resulting in widespread acceptance of behaviours that are harmful to children such as female genital mutilation / cutting.¹¹
- Poverty drives malnutrition as well as limited access to adequate services and misconceptions on positive parenting.
- There is still a general scepticism around the importance of nurseries for cognitive, social and emotional development. In addition to limited specific expertise among kindergarten teachers.
- Lack of awareness, knowledge and quality of services for children with disabilities remains a widespread issue in the country.

3.4 System related challenges for C4D

The system related challenges for C4D identified by the working groups included the following:

- The widespread use of awareness raising communication or one-directional communication which tends to be top-down or vertical, often involving an organization telling people what to do without recourse to discussion. Disseminating information via various channels (e.g., a radio soap drama, printed extension leaflets, community development videos) represents only one step in the process of communication for behavioural change. Lacking to provide the target audience with the opportunity to discuss an issue that moves a communication initiative away from a vertical, one-way process towards a horizontal, two-way participatory process has been identified as a structural gap within the different sectors involved to promote ECD (health, nutrition, care, early learning and social protection). In other words lacking participatory communication opportunities has been identified as a limit to the impact communication can play to promote ECD.
- The need for a coherent policy approach that could support the implementation of C4D initiatives, at both the national and local level, was stressed. Key to this is capacity development and the strengthening of existing structures at both policy and practice level.
- Limited understanding of communication for development among decision-makers. Most people in key decision-making positions in governments' institutions still lack a clear idea of what development communication is or what it is for. Although decision makers understand the need for communication, they tend to see it in terms of communication for public relations and disseminating information.
- Inadequate evidence and documentation on participatory communication in Egypt as well as evidences on social and behavioural change dynamics emerged as a system gap to optimize the role C4D can play in support of ECD.

¹¹ FGM/C is at the core of girls and women's sexuality control and major disruptive factor of the enabling conditions essential for people to exercise their reproductive rights, including later marriage, delay of first birth, and longer intervals between births, more equitable parental responsibilities and demand for smaller families.

- The lack of a systemic and strategic use of new information technologies (ITs) to potentially reduce isolation, facilitate dialogue and participation, and promote interactive networks; together with limited expertise in converging traditional communication channels with new media and ITs in order to greatly enhance people's ability to share experiences and knowledge, and creates new opportunities for using communication among key players have been also mentioned among the system related barriers for C4D.
- Limited communication capacity building and coordination opportunities. Most initiatives are led by individuals on a fragmented and with a project based approach. When the project ends or the individual moves on, the initiative ends and the vision is lost.
- Absence of networking among communication practitioners, amplified by the absence of any institutionalized knowledge hub and/or training centre. The lack of coordination mechanisms that could take the lead in bringing practitioners together to develop a common strategic approach.

3.5 Opportunities for C4D in Egypt

Among the opportunities identified during the SWOT analysis, the participants highlighted the following:

- Existing trust for community based mechanisms as well as for the health system. The increased use in terms of frequency and access to health care facilities has also been identified as strategic for social and behavioural change on ECD.
- High exposure and effect of media in the country was repeatedly and consistently raised as huge opportunity together with the increased institutional (government, national and international organizations) support for social and behavioural change strategies.
- Existence of very well established FBOs already committed to support ECD in Egypt.
- Presence of a very vibrant private sector committed to support ECD in Egypt.
- Growing number of adolescents in the country potentially prone to adopt new normative frameworks and behaviours.

4.0 GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

In terms of priority focus of communication interventions it was agreed that this should be to engage parents and caregivers of young children including a) fathers / male caregivers, b) parents of malnourished children; c) parents of children with disabilities, d) teenage / adolescent parents, e) front line workers, civil society organizations facilitating parenting education and community mobilization, and f) relevant local authorities in learning new narratives around caring for young

children and stimulating dialogue at the individual and community level which will be essential for accepting and initiating positive parenting practices.

The overall goal of the C4D for ECD road map was defined by the workshop as ***‘to enhance parents and care givers’ skills and social support needed to provide nurturing care and positive parenting for children 0 to 6 years focusing on the most vulnerable’***.

Ultimately the C4D for ECD road map will contribute to achieve the following specific objectives:

- All children from birth to 6 years old are physically, emotionally, socially, culturally, and academically prepared to become healthy, happy, successful adults
- Gender inequality in child socialization and male-female relations is reduced
- Social inclusion and non-discrimination of children with disabilities is improved

In order to achieve the above ultimate objectives, the **outcomes level results** include:

- Increased expectation for and actual engagement of fathers in young child caregiving
- Increased popularity of positive parenting as a respected practice or social norm
- Increased acceptance of early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months especially among most marginalized mother including application of appropriate weaning practices and healthy eating habits during early years
- Increased and improved parent-child interactions and engagement in early stimulation and early learning activities
- Increased societal acceptance and support for young children to freely express themselves with equal value placed on girls and boys and gender inequality is reduced
- Reduced acceptance for violence against children and corporal punishment
- Improved perception and inclusion of children with disabilities

These outcome level results will imply the following **intermediate results**:

- Mainstreaming the issue of positive parenting in the media agenda and on the national discourse
- Faith based organizations are highly engaged on healthy family relationships
- Enabling a wider reach out to underprivileged communities
- Children and youth are actively engaged in shaping the vision of positive parenting

5.0 SCOPE AND CONTENT FOR THE POSITIVE PARENTING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

To address the challenges identified, there was consensus amongst the workshop participants that C4D can play an essential role in enhancing knowledge and awareness, and most importantly it can contribute in creating an enabling environment to facilitate social and behavioural change.

Based on neuroscience evidence, participants were made aware of the importance of the early years of a child’s life, specifically the first 1,000 days, as well as the importance of maternal health during pregnancy, as critical to healthy brain development, cognitive and language growth that enable children to become healthy adults and productive community members. There is a pivotal window to implement a variety of cost-effective strategies that can change how the brain is wired, influence the expression of genes in development and have a marked impact on future functioning throughout

life.¹² These invaluable practices include early stimulation and learning through play, proper nutrition, including exclusive breastfeeding, medical care such as immunizations, consistency and structure, emotional bonding, security and responsive caregiving. Where these practices stand in contrast to long-established social norms, such as lack of paternal involvement with young children, lack of support for nursery school, violent discipline and so many more, it was agreed by workshop participants that C4D strategies are essential complements to even the most expansive investments in services and other infrastructure. Developed through evidence-based methodology that is participatory and research-based, C4D interventions include a wide range of media and interpersonal interventions tailored to local cultural context to promote positive and measurable behavioural and social change.

The workshop participants identified the need to redefine the normative framework on **‘positive parenting’** as instrumental to triggering social and behavioural change in support of ECD in all its components: nutrition, early stimulation, protection and health. Key facts and potential messages that can be used as reference to guide communication on positive parenting were discussed within different working groups, these include:

Good nutrition

Good nutrition is vital for a child's growth and development. Exclusive breastfeeding on demand for the first six months, timely introduction of safe and nutritious foods at the age of 6 months and continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond provide the child with optimal nutrition and health benefits¹³. While the mother has the primary role of breastfeeding the child, the father can support her by making sure she has nutritious food, helping with household and childcare responsibilities, and being emotionally supportive of her, the baby, the older children and other family members. The diet of a pregnant woman and that of a young child should be varied and nutritious. It should include essential nutrients such as proteins and essential fats to help a child's body grow and have energy, vitamin A to help a child resist illness, iodine to help ensure the healthy development of a child's brain, and iron to protect a child's mental and physical abilities.

Responsive feeding

When a baby is fed by breast feeding or weaning foods, this does much more than just providing the baby with food to grow. Feeding is an important time to help develop a baby's brain and support learning. While breastfeeding, a mother looks into her baby's eyes and talks or sings to it while stroking his or her hair and body. As the baby grows older, feeding time can be used to play games, for example: pretending the spoon is a bird or a plane and making sounds as the mother or father puts food in the baby's mouth, letting the baby try to feed him or herself, or praising him or her for trying.

Early stimulation and play

The early years, especially the first three years of life, are the most important for building the baby's brain. During early childhood, children learn through their senses and through play. Everything a child sees, touches or hears, helps to shape the brain for thinking and learning. Beginning from birth give your baby colourful things to look at, toys that make different sounds and take the time to play simple games with your child every day. Family members and other caregivers can help children learn by giving them simple tasks with clear instructions, providing objects to play with and suggesting new activities. Adults should show interest in but should not dominate children's play. All children need a

¹² Building better Brains: New Frontiers in Early Childhood Development(2016) UNICEF

¹³ Facts For Life (2017) Early development and early learning. <http://www.factsforlifeglobal.org/03/2.html>
(Accessed: 20 July 2017)

variety of simple play materials that are suitable for their stage of development and learning. Clean, safe household items like pots with wooden spoons, or containers to put into each other. Water, sand, cardboard boxes, wooden building blocks, are just as good for facilitating a child's play and learning as toys bought from a shop. Children are constantly changing and developing new abilities. Caregivers should notice these changes and follow the child's lead. Responding to and encouraging children helps them develop more quickly.

Repetition, mastery and positive reinforcement

Children learn by trying until they succeed. Parents and caregivers need to help their young children to be challenged in their play and learning (for example putting a toy beyond a child's reach and encouraging them to find a way to reach it). They also need to be patient when their young child insists on trying to do something without help or wants to do something over and over. As long as the child is protected from danger, struggling to do something new, making mistakes and learning how to correct these provides the small steps along the way to children's learning. Giving children encouraging feedback as they make their efforts helps to give them motivation and confidence.

Outdoor play and exploration

Young children need to be provided with opportunities for outdoor play and exploration. They need to be taken to places where it is safe to run, get physical exercise and play freely. Playing outdoors helps children interact with the natural world, use their senses and develop their curiosity.

Early language development

Even before babies are born they can hear the voices of their parents. From as early as a week old, babies know the familiar voice of their mother and father. In the first two years of life, even before a child is able to speak, they are beginning to learn the meaning of words. Children learn language quickly and easily when parents and caregivers call them by name, respond to and copy their noises, have children listen to and sing songs and repeat rhymes, tell them stories, read picture books, pointing out new things and say their names. When parents and other caregivers talk and interact with children in their first language, it helps children develop the ability to think and express themselves.

Social development

Children learn how to behave socially by imitating the behaviour of those closest to them, especially their parents. One way children learn is by copying what others do. If men and women do not treat each other equally, it is likely that the child will observe, learn and copy this behaviour. If adults shout, behave violently, exclude or discriminate, children will learn this type of behaviour. If adults treat others with kindness, respect and patience, children will follow their example. If mothers and fathers treat each other with love and respect, this is what their children will learn and most likely 'replay' in their adult relationships. If you want the best for your child, show him/her the best examples of how to live and interact with others. Help your child to share, to care and respect others and to express their culture positively. Children like to pretend. This should be encouraged, as it helps to develop their imagination and creativity. It also helps the child understand different ways people behave. As young children grow older they need opportunities to learn and socialize with other children of their age. Group learning activities, run by a trained caregiver or teacher at home or in a nursery school or kindergarten, are important in helping children get ready for school.

Emotional development

Babies need lots of loving care, closeness and affection in order to feel loved, safe and protected. Beginning from pregnancy, mothers, fathers and other family members can gently stroke mothers'

belly to begin making contact with baby inside. After birth, breastfeeding on demand, holding babies close, gently stroking them, responding to their cries, talking in soothing voices and is comforting for the baby and helps with bonding. Young children become frustrated if they are unable to do something or have something they want. They are often frightened of strangers, new situations or the dark. Be patient, listen and reassure children when they express strong emotions. These early positive experiences with mother, father and other caregivers and family members are important for young children's emotional development including development of confidence, trust in others and being well balanced throughout life.

Positive discipline

Young children's brains can be damaged if they receive harsh or frequent punishment, if they are shouted at or if they are neglected or abused. Children whose physical appearance or actions are laughed at, punished or ignored may grow up shy and unable to express emotions normally. These types of stresses will affect a child's learning, confidence and social interactions with others throughout life. Children who are hit or beaten are also more likely to become violent themselves when they are older. Find positive ways of managing and influencing children's behaviour so that they can feel secure, loved and confident. Provide children with clear explanations about what to do and what not to do. Introduce consistent, predictable routines so children know what to expect and be consistent about your expectations. Praise and reward children for their efforts and good behaviour. Positive reinforcement for good behaviour is like preventive action for misbehaviour. The rewards and incentives teaches children that positive behaviour brings positive consequences.

Gender socialization

Boys and girls have the same physical, mental, emotional and social needs. Both have the same need for affection, attention and approval. Both girls and boys need to feel equally valued and to be given equal opportunities to learn and explore. Boys should be allowed to play with toys such as dolls as these can help to learn nurturing skills. On the other hand, girls need to be encouraged to play with building or assembly toys that are usually given to boys. Boys should be helped to feel it is acceptable to cry and show emotions and be encouraged to help with small household tasks while girls should be helped to play.

Fathers' involvement

A father's role is as important as the mother's in nurturing, showing affection and caring for their babies and young children. Fathers should not wait until their child is older to take part in nurturing and caregiving, in showing affection and in playing games with them. While the mother has the primary role of breastfeeding, the father can support her by helping to make sure she has nutritious food, helping with household and childcare responsibilities, and being emotionally supportive of her, the baby, older children and other family members.

Inclusion

Stimulation, play and being included in play with other children and adults are especially important for children with disabilities or chronic illnesses.

6.0 APPROACHES FOR THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

Participants agreed that social and behavioural change to enhance positive parenting will require a coordinated, systemic and synergic approach allowing to mainstream positive parenting within existing networks and systems. Overall the discussion led to acknowledging that positive parenting related behaviours are determined not only by awareness raising and knowledge sharing among care

givers and service providers but also by shifting individual attitudes, change social expectations regarding the behaviours, publicize changes in attitudes, expectations and behaviours, and finally by reinforcing new norms and behaviours.¹⁴ The workshop facilitators clarified that strategic communication is instrumental to:

1. **Tackle attitudes towards** negative behaviours by addressing incorrect factual beliefs, providing examples of the harm it causes, raising awareness of contradictions with other norms, reframing an issue so participants see it in a new way, highlighting the ‘dispersal’ of the norm within the reference group, highlighting the direction of change within the reference group.
2. **Promote public debate and deliberation around the norm.** Public debate and deliberation is important to shift social expectations so individuals can see and hear from others in the reference group who may be changing their attitudes towards positive parenting. For example, edutainment and mass media can be used as a way of doing this at scale. Social media and mobile technologies are other obvious ways to reach large numbers of people and promote debate.
3. **Promote positive alternatives.** Strategic communication can amplify alternatives to harmful norms to make change as easy as possible (e.g. positive discipline). In fact it may be easier to start a new norm than tackle an existing one. The benefits of the new behaviour should be clearly demonstrated so that people feel they will gain something from shifting to the new norm. In addition, the new behaviour should be highly visible so that it is more salient than the old behaviour, and therefore more likely to influence behaviour (e.g. messaging across multiple media and repeated over time).
4. **Publicize the change.** Social norms marketing and edutainment have used the mass media to promote role models in radio and TV dramas that the audience can identify with. Role models may persuade people to adopt new norms, condemn existing norms and/or simply make an alternative seem feasible where previously it was unimaginable. They may be community leaders, religious figures or celebrities such as music or sports stars, but they may also be other boys, girls or adults who challenge particular norms, or who have done so in the past and can be seen as living proof that new norms can lead to positive outcomes.
5. **Reinforce the new norm.** New behaviours need to be practiced to become normal. Strategic communication can help to promote, for example the child helpline to encourage help-seeking behaviour, as well as create rewarding mechanisms like compliance to role models. Rewards could take the form of esteem and sense of belonging to a group of early adopters endorsed by aspirational role models and ambassadors.

The approach proposed capitalises on the tendency for humans to ‘think socially’ therefore recognising and addressing social motivations in addition to knowledge sharing and awareness raising to enhance the impact of multidimensional strategies needed to promote ECD. This approach is based on the following assumptions: a) what an individual believes others expect of him or her (and the sanctions and rewards that may follow) can be a more powerful driver, or constraint, than individual attitudes, or the law; b) by strengthening emerging positive social norms the relevance of existing normative behaviours harmful for children such as violence against children, bad nutrition or lack of early stimulation among others, will be weakened up to the point of being discontinued.

¹⁴ Alexander-Scott, et al. (2016) Shifting social norms to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) DIFID, January 2016

7.0 RECOMMENDED PLATFORMS/INTERVENTIONS for STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

The platforms, identified by participants as possible platforms for Strategic Communication on Positive Parenting and ECD included the following:

- Family Clubs (within Primary Health Units)
- Cash Transfer Programmes (e.g. Takaful Karama)
- Youth Centres and University outreach (e.g. University Pioneer initiative)
- Community based mechanisms (e.g. community based schools)
- Religious institutions/ inter-faith initiatives
- Media

Through a participatory process, participants proposed and agreed on the following criteria for platforms and interventions for Strategic Communication on positive parenting and ECD, that it should be:

- 1) **Effective** (the importance and effectiveness of communication for development in the platform and how it is or can be utilized to create the required positive change on parenting to reach the set values identified for ECD)
- 2) **At Scale** (the platform is well established to adopt the communication for development interventions on national scale and community levels in less time to create change)
- 3) **Inclusive** (the communication for development efforts through the platform include, mobilize and unify different groups and stakeholders in an integrated manner to create the required change)
- 4) **Readiness** (the platform is ready for an early win and has the benefit of immediate implementation of communication for development interventions in a less time than the other programs)
- 5) **Sustainable** (the platform is well established and has the capacity to implement the communication for development interventions in a sustained and frequent manner to create the required change)

To identify the top priority entry points/platforms for strategic communication interventions to reach parents/caregivers, each of the identified existing and potential platforms were assessed through a participatory exercise where groups were engaged in a competitive simulation of developing a proposal for a USD \$15 million grant. The prioritization and planning process passed through five stages: 1) re-cap briefing groups' facilitators on selection criteria to guide the in-depth group discussions; 2) group discussions to develop a brief proposal in compliance with the set criteria and reflecting why their assigned platform or intervention is the most eligible for support; 3) presenting the proposal guided by the set criteria; 4) Voting on the platforms based on the advantages of the platforms as presented by the groups the highest score being the top priority; and 5) selection of top priority platforms to be discussed in depth with plans developed for the Strategic Communication road map.

To be positioned and selected as a top priority communication platform or entry point for C4D interventions, it was agreed that the proposed platforms would need to fulfil the above agreed eligibility criteria.

The platform of media (mass and social media) was selected to be the top priority one in reaching parents nationwide immediately with the capacity to support and promote other platforms and interventions in a sustainable manner to create positive social and behavioural change for ECD. This selection is based on the participants' collective decision making process that took place through a voting exercise upon completion of platforms' presentations.

The outcome of the platforms' prioritization exercise led to a consensus by participants that media as a platform with its channels and tools should serve a pivotal role and be positioned as the central hub for all other communication for development interventions and platforms contributing to positive parenting for ECD.

It was agreed that kindergartens, would provide opportunities for promoting Child-to-Child and Child-to-Parent approaches, however in terms of communication for positive parenting, consensus was that this should have lower level priority in the short term as kindergartens as an ECD service do not meet all of the selection criteria as a priority platform for strategic communication given the current limited number and low level of enrolment. As more kindergartens/nurseries are built and the service expands, it was agreed that communication to create demand would be an important role for the stakeholders working on the strategic communication initiative. Beyond communication, it was also agreed that Private Sector support for nurseries and kindergartens will be invaluable.

It was also agreed that the interventions could largely be grouped in terms of inter-personal platforms on one hand and media platforms on the other. The following provides a summary of the proposed focus of each platform for Strategic Communication as discussed and agreed amongst the participants:

7.1 Inter-personal Platforms

Inter-personal entry points or platforms aim to engage parents directly through individual counselling of parents or engage communities by targeting individuals within their reference network. Platforms for inter-personal communication are important avenues to support social dialogue, analysis, collective action and peer support.

7.1.1 Integration of Positive Parenting Communication through Government Services

The analysis highlighted that government service delivery centres serving parents and parents to come at community level often presents point of convergences that allows to integrate strategic communication activities. These ranges from brand visibility, awareness raising, and dialogue sessions to systemic synergies. The service provided is usually of high interest for the community therefore represents a valid entry point to initiate community dialogue dynamics even on potentially controversial issues. For example, waiting rooms equipped with multimedia tools to see and/or listen and read can stimulate debates and conversations between peers within a protected environment; trained service provider can advocate for the issue; service's tools can also become a vehicle to share information such as, for example, the vaccination card.

Furthermore, the analysis acknowledged that addressing the well-being of children, youth, and families often requires integration with other service systems and eventually restructuring of programs and services to better address social, emotional, and behavioural functioning. For example, counselling sessions for children, adolescents and parents within the school system; focus groups discussions on positive parenting within the health sector; linking qualification criteria to social protection schemes, such as cash transfer programs to ECD standards.

The expected result enables a wider reach out of underprivileged communities in a systematic, sustainable and organic manner.

Primary health units, cash transfer related programmes, and kindergartens have been discussed by the different groups:

- Primary Health Units (PHU). Egypt has around 5,800 PHUs providing primary care to mothers and children all over the country. So far, a pilot programme reaching 38 of these centres provides an integrated family and parenting programme called Family Clubs to help families deal with prenatal and postnatal issues, premarital tests, social, psychological and nutrition awareness within the family. PHUs are also a hub for Village Pioneers, making it possible to expand outreach community programmes with positive parenting opportunities. PHUs and Family Clubs also work with non-Egyptians, such as refugees and families in crisis, which means that they offer social inclusion to various components of the society. Breast-feeding mother support groups linked to the PHUs have been also mentioned as promising platform.
- The Cash Transfer Programme (Takafol & Karama). This programme aims at providing monetary support to 4 million families falling below the poverty line in Egypt. Takafol & Karama currently supports 1.7 million families with the target to reach 3.5 million families within the next two to three years. The cash support is tied to parenting conditions, including ensuring education, healthcare, and nutrition.
- Kindergartens. Kindergartens would provide opportunities for promoting child-to-child and child-to-parent approaches, however currently limited number of kindergartens in the country, the low level of enrolment and the lack of quality standards constitute significant challenges.

In the matrix, here below, the list of potential activities discussed within the different working groups.

SERVICES RELATED PLATFORMS	
GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS	ACTIVITIES
Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP)	Counselling, helpline and parenting books.
Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS)	Facilitate community dialogue and capacity building opportunities such as training on toy making with recycling materials.
Ministry of Culture (MoC)	Establish a positive parenting certificate as prerequisite for marriage and/or prior to obtaining a birth certificates.
Ministry of Youth (MoY)	Video screening on positive parenting within waiting rooms.
National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)	Social marketing and Artwork such as beautification of Family Club spaces engaging the local community.
	Dual Communication books on positive parenting (i.e. for both parents and children e.g. Speaking Books in Arabic).
	Development of prototypes and production for set of key toys for early learning.
	Video production of positive parenting series including importance of physical exercise

	healthy eating, early stimulation etc.), to be distributed through service delivery points (PHU, post offices, KGs).
	Child-to-child and child-to-parent approaches for positive parenting.
	Motivation tools to use in attracting parents (including fathers) such as fun days, games, awards, incentives, books, theatres.

7.1.2 Faith based organizations (FBOs)

FBOs are a platform deeply rooted in the Egyptian society. Religious leaders enjoy a credible stance within the society with a nationwide infrastructural coverage through mosques and churches thus providing an ecosystem for social initiatives, with many partnerships with relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, there is an emerging trend of highlighting ECD related practices within the religious discourse since they are consistent with the teachings of Islam and Christianity. The existing financial assistance mechanisms and initiatives to support the most in need has been also identified as key entry point to interact with the most vulnerable and potentially enhance knowledge on positive parenting. The recommendations for the way forward includes capacity building on communication and positive parenting skills for religious leaders, especially women; conducting home visits as well as activities in family centres, public libraries, schools and universities in addition to conferences and sessions in mosques and churches.

The expected result is to have interfaith groups highly engaged in positive parenting to nurturing a culture of child respect and encouragement of their self-expression and nurtures an image change of women roles in society, towards more balanced gender relationships where women become a source of knowledge and wisdom.

The group assigned to analyse the FBO platforms identified the following potential activities.

FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS	
GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS	ACTIVITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ministry of Awqaf of Egypt ● Al Azhar Institution and its university ● The Coptic Church of Egypt 	Develop training package(s) for different religious leaders' groups on positive parenting from an inter-faith prospective.
	Capacitate religious men and women (do3ah and wa3ezat) from church and mosque to reach out to a wider public. For example, by organizing social activities in libraries and family clubs, for religious leaders to engage with youth and children and lead by example.
	Develop training package(s) for different religious leader's groups on positive parenting from an inter-faith prospective.

	Design and organize a series of conferences and discussion forums. For example, joint national quarterly themed conferences gathering religious leaders with other experts, to be followed by discussion forums, awareness raising church and mosques lessons on the local level targeting different groups (parents, newlywed, youth, etc.).
	Train and activate the role of religious women leaders (Wa3zat) to offer household counselling.
	Collaborate with Zakat house to offer awareness raising activities and dialogue opportunities on positive parenting to families receiving financial support.
	Offer training for university students to capacitate them to organize raising awareness activities at family and community level.

7.1.3 Youth Centred Platforms

The participants identified three main platforms related to youth engagement, Youth Centres, Students led initiatives such as “The University Pioneers Initiative” and Cultural Centres. The expected result is to engage youth as social partners in defining and supporting the positive parenting normative framework.

With a scale of 4,300 across Egypt, serving both children and young adults, Youth Centres have been identified as instrumental to enhance positive parenting dialogue opportunities. Furthermore, Youth Centres are main legal places for parental visits in the case of divorce, meaning that divorcees get to see their children during weekly visits at the Youth Centre, hence it could be a good chance to engage on positive parenting to mitigate potential divorce (violent/aggressive attitudes) negative impact on children.

The University Pioneer Initiative (UPI) led by the NPC with UNICEF’s technical and financial support also emerged as a very promising model for community engagement. The UPI initiative is based on capacity building for university students to become agent of change among peers and communities on key behaviours such as healthy life style, family health, nutrition and improved life style, prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases. With over 1200 students already trained and 12 universities engaged, the model launched in 2017, shows a lot of potential to enhance positive parenting practices.

The Ministry of Culture led activities in widespread nationwide Cultural Centres such as interactive community theatres; outreach materials and content production; reading/painting/singing/crafts opportunities have been unanimously identified as platforms full of potential for intergenerational dialogue and possibly as opportunities for positive parenting knowledge sharing.

YOUTH FOCUSED PLATFORMS

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS	ACTIVITIES
Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP)	Training of youth in Interactive community theatre on positive parenting through Youth Centres.
National Population Council (NPC)	
Ministry of Culture (MoC)	Positive Parenting programme in public libraries including family cinema discussion groups, toy-making demonstrations and cultural activities (interactive theatre, sports, arts, dancing).
Ministry of Youth (MoY)	
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Positive Parenting programme in public libraries including family cinema discussion groups, toy-making demonstrations and cultural activities (interactive theatre, sports, arts, dancing).
The Higher Council for Universities	Capacity building on positive parenting, peer and community engagement for students and youth in general.
	Organize viewing clubs of the Positive Parenting Edutainment show in Youth and Cultural Centres.
	Mobile phone application providing user friendly applied positive parenting tips.
	Capacity building of students for collection of examples positive parenting practices.

7.2 Media Platforms

How an issue is described, or framed, can affect whether it has popular or political support. Like capturing a landscape in a photograph or painting, framing information means putting it into a context that helps audiences absorb and interpret it. Framing is the translation process between incoming things we see, read or hear — and the ideas already in our heads. Frames are important to advocates because they influence how people react to ideas.¹⁵

The media have an essential role to play in framing issues because the public gets exposed to certain behaviours (apart from personal experience) through the filter of what appears in the media. Our understanding of positive parenting is influenced by what we see in print, hear in broadcast and experience in television and social media. Unfortunately, we know from decades of news studies that patterns in news coverage may instil fear by highlighting the most extreme cases, reinforce stereotypes about negative practices and discourage positive action by buttressing assumptions that certain harmful behaviours are intractable.¹⁶

¹⁵ What surrounds us shapes us: Making the environmental case for tobacco control (2016). Berkeley, Media Studies Group.

¹⁶ Changing the Discourse About Community Violence: to prevent it, we have to talk about it, Berkley Media Studies Group.

The challenge is to reframe positive parenting and early childhood development so it is understood as a public wellbeing problem in which after-the-fact responses are coupled with strategies for promoting ECD. Shifting the national discourse towards solutions, including community-led strategies to promote ECD and positive parenting is key to improve children development.

Framing positive parenting and ECD as a social issue where equity is central, because every child deserves to fulfil their full potentials, and move the conversation toward community, cohesion and shared action for early childhood development and protection from violence is essential to maximise the role media can play for social change. This is particularly relevant in a country where almost all households own a television (98%).¹⁷ An analysis of TV viewing habits between 2009 and 2012 from market research indicates that Egyptians spend a significant amount of time watching television with 40% of people watching up to 4 hours of television per day. TV is considered a main source of information and entertainment. Television presenters continue to be the undisputed leaders of public opinion in Egypt, where over a quarter of the population is illiterate.

The number of Egyptians using the internet has also witnessed an unprecedented and unique growth, moving from 450,000 internet users (December 2000) to 34.8 million Egyptians (June 2016). The rate of internet penetration in the country has reached 38.6 percent. Social media is extremely powerful in Egypt with Facebook being the most popular; as of June 2016, approximately 32 million people have access to Facebook in Egypt. 2016.¹⁸ WhatsApp and YouTube are also widely spread, respectively 58% and 49% of national internet user.¹⁹

In general, on average, people spend about 12 hours per week interacting online with friends, and another seven hours interacting with family. Younger adults, ages 18-24, spend more than twice as much time socializing with friends online than those 45 and older (15 hours vs 7 hours). The younger segment also socializes with friends more offline (17 hours vs. 12 hours). Both age groups, though, spend similar amounts of time with family online (7 hours for younger adults and 6 for older adults), but older adults are slightly more likely to socialize in-person with family (27 hours for younger adults vs. 31 for older adults).²⁰

Furthermore, Egypt has a rich and highly talented international standard mass media broadcasting and production capacity. Overall, there are 98 TV stations²¹ for Television, the most popular medium, there are two state-run national TVs and six regional channels. State-run radio operates about 70 stations belonging to eight networks; two privately owned radio stations operational. Egypt is a big regional force in satellite TV. Most leading Arab pay TV networks have a presence at Media Production City in Cairo. Egypt is currently experiencing a proliferation of private media that, together with several Arab and foreign channels, achieved progress over state media in the battle to win mass' attention.

To use media as platform for social and behavioural change on positive parenting the workshop participants prioritized mainly three particularly relevant modalities, edu-tainment, public advocacy and content placement.

7.2.1 Edu-tainment

¹⁷ EDHS 2014

¹⁸ Internet World Statistics: <http://www.internetsociety.org/globalinternetreport>

¹⁹ E-Marketing Insights, 2014 Edition

²⁰ <http://www.mideastmedia.org/survey/2015/chapter/social-media.html#subchapter1>

²¹ <http://www.pressreference.com/Co-Fa/Egypt.html>

Edu-tainment media has proven to be a more effective method than direct messaging.²² Stories and mass media entertainment programmes have been widely used throughout the world as a powerful means to educate, inform, and influence social and individual change. The field known as edutainment uses popular entertainment formats to tackle serious social issues in a bold and entertaining way. Stories can draw audiences into the centre of an issue, move people emotionally and catalyse discussion and debate.

Edutainment has a strong track record in attracting mass audiences, sustaining deeper engagement and message reinforcement through complementary transmedia and effecting substantive change in attitudes and practices over the last forty years. Statistics repeatedly reveal that TV dramas with large audiences lead to measurable improvements in utilization of services (family planning hotlines, literacy classes, clinic visits); sales of products marketed (specific contraceptives) and two-way communication (letter writing, social media posts)²³

CASE STUDY

Shuga: Taking HIV Prevention 360 Degrees

In five seasons on air so far, the edutainment TV series Shuga produced by the MTV Staying Alive Foundation with support from UNICEF, PEPFAR, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners has become the world's largest global HIV prevention media initiative. In 2016 the drama was aired on 167 broadcasters worldwide, had over 500 million viewers, and was broadcast in 80% of all African countries. From initial production in Kenya, moving on to Nigeria, Shuga is now expected to be produced in Egypt in 2020. Central to Shuga's popularity is its ability to interweave messaging around HIV testing and gender-based violence into steamy drama and intrigue with music and glamour that appeals to a pan-African audience. The production worked closely with young people to develop scripts that reflected their authentic experiences and nurtured new local talent alongside existing celebrities. But what has made Shuga a phenomenon is the full 360-degree treatment that has been built around it to deepen exposure to the messaging and two-way communication channels. This includes repackaging of the drama as a radio show for audiences in rural and pre-urban areas and a magazine show, PSAs, a full-length feature film, a comic book, social media channels, and a documentary. Weekly SMS poll questions and the ability to 'Call a Character' via Skype to comment auditions on Shuga's YouTube channel and to vote on shortlisted future cast members. Through its use of multiple media formats, Shuga has been able to engage a large audience. In just a 6-month span, Shuga had over 1.5 million YouTube views and over 1.7 million iRoko (online platform) views. Furthermore, UNICEF and Elton John Foundation have funded the training of Peer Educators and testers, to facilitate greater access to testing and follow-up with local hospitals for further testing, counselling and treatment. In a randomized control trial, DFID and the World Bank found that Shuga had succeeded in improving attitudes towards people living with HIV and in improving knowledge of how HIV is transmitted. It also found that more young people are now being tested for HIV and that there is an increased understanding of the risks of having multiple sexual partners.

The general commitment to support the design and production of edu-tainment media in support of the positive parenting initiative emerged strongly from the consultation. Participants agreed that within the given media landscape a TV drama series as kick off format might be the most appropriate solution. Other relevant formats emerged from the discussion are radio drama and magazine and TV talent show.

²² Singhal A., Cody M., Rogers E., Sabido M (2014) Entertainment-Education and Social Change: History, Research and Practice, LEA Publishing.

²³ Peter Vaughan, P. 92016), *Evidence of Behavioral Impact of Entertainment-Education Television Programs* (

The TV show should target parents and community members to address positive parenting for ECD. The core of this activity is to use the edutainment approach through a popular main stream TV program that aims to identify, support and champion Egyptian and non-Egyptian fathers and mothers, newly married, couples expecting babies and more generally parents below the age of 45 years who practice early child development on a daily base. The TV show will enhance their visibility making the positive behaviour more popular to ultimately generate a shift in social expectations on the role of the father within the family. The TV show champions understand, value and support their wives to form an equal caring community (parents) who are trying to resist negative social norms and challenge the negative influence on their decisions regarding their own children's wellbeing. Responsible, conscious and caring fathers and mothers will be modelled and used as innovators who will take the lead in their communities and shift the normal expected roles. This approach aims to inspire a wide range of other caregivers and community members who are supporting the enabling environment for change.

The importance of integrating different formats across different media has been identified as a key priority together with the need to identify an engaging and interactive format which can easily dialoguing with digital platforms and on the ground activities.

7.2.2 Content placement

It was also agreed that in addition to development of new programmes, the media strategy would include efforts to integrate positive parenting content in existing child and family-oriented programmes across media.

Using media to shift the focus from the personal to the social, from the behaviour or practice to the policy or environment to not only fill the knowledge gap but also address the normative framework has been identified as a relevant media platform.

7.2.3 Public advocacy

The utilization of mass media using public advocacy outreach campaigns and more generally media advocacy was also a strong aspect agreed upon by participants with the objective of increasing public awareness, commitment and ownership for the initiative from household to state levels.

Participants also stressed the importance of modelling positive behaviours through ambassadors and champions, including leveraging UN's Goodwill Ambassadors. Role models can play a positive and incremental role in promoting the Positive Parenting initiative as well as enhancing the brand visibility ensuring a sustained behaviour change efforts.

7.2.4 Digital platforms / Social Media

Participants discussed and agreed on the importance of the 360 approach of multimedia. A significant part of this will require an effective use of social media platforms. Digital Platforms will also be needed for more in-depth parenting education and support. Suggestions from participants included a central Positive Parenting Web Platform, design of a positive parenting App for use by youth volunteers/community facilitators.

The importance of social media and digital platforms for network building and ultimately diffusion of positive parenting behaviours has been unanimously raised together with the role that digital communication can have to enhance engagement at community level.

Digital Platforms have been identified also as key tool for more in-depth parenting education and support. While each of the following are preliminary ideas for further discussion, participants outlined possibilities for potential types of Social/Digital Media engagement:

- **Positive Parenting Web Platform:** The comprehensive strategic communication initiative planned will require development of a central Positive Parenting Web Platform. The platform will facilitate linkage to existing social media initiatives existing across the country. These include the EVAC Advocacy Group (Elimination of Violence against Children), the “Lactivist” Breast Feeding Support Group, the University Pioneer Youth Initiative etc.
- **Positive Parenting App:** The opportunity exists for design of a positive parenting App for use by youth volunteers/community facilitators with the main aim of capturing video clips, stories, and photos of local positive parenting examples, folklore and proverbs to provide culturally appropriate guidance on positive parenting. The App could also potentially support development of a bank of e-learning material, encourage peer-to-peer exchange on parenting and facilitate engagement (voting and polling related to the media edu-tainment programmes).
- **“Internet of Positive Parents”:** Possible adaptation of the highly successful UNICEF-supported innovation - “Internet of Good Things” which is currently being used in 57 countries by approximately 10 million users. <http://unicefstories.org/2016/10/31/i-just-found-the-internet-of-good-things-and-i-liked-it/>. The potential of the “internet of positive parents” would aim at an ever increasing data bank providing profiles of everyday people who provide inspiring examples of various domains of positive parenting.

8.0 DIAGRAMMATIC MODEL FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION TO PROMOTE POSITIVE PARENTING AND ECD

The following model was agreed, adapted and elaborated on by the workshop participants as a visual representation of the multi-sectoral intervention package of priority components entry points and platforms for the integrated Strategic Communication initiative to promote positive parenting and Early Childhood Development based on the set of agreed criteria including effectiveness, scale potential, inclusiveness, readiness to implement and sustainability.

Strategic Communication for Positive Parenting and ECD Model



In summary participants agreed that Multi-Media should be at the heart and centre of the intervention package given the power of media to disseminate information at wide scale, secure engagement of multiple audiences and influence public attitudes, expectations and behaviours. Participants agreed also that the multi-media engagement strategy should be implemented using a “360 degree” approach that will ensure that communication through media platforms will link with complement communication and engagement efforts through inter-personal platforms so that

families and communities will be reached consistently in multiple ways. It was agreed that the multi-media package will have four distinct but inter-related components: 1) edu-tainment production; 2) content placement, 3) digital platforms including social media; 4) advocacy. Overall the uniqueness of the strategic communication model proposed will be the constant interactions with the identified face-to-face platforms described above to carefully balancing the emphasis between delivery of messages, dialogue and linkages with services delivery and local (traditional and modern) institutions.

9.0 THE WAY FORWARD

Having defined the vision, the participants focused on identifying elements needed to take forward the strategy implementation. The key elements identified were as follows: 1) development of branding for the initiative, 2) establishment of solid partnerships with the private sector and with media and 3) establishment of a coalition of relevant stakeholders engaged and committed to move forward the strategy implementation.

9.1 Branding

To provide an overarching umbrella to connect the multiple communication for development initiatives planned, participants agreed that a strong locally owned Egyptian brand needs to be developed to capture the vision and values of the national positive parenting initiative. Participants emphasized that a shared branding identity has a central role to strengthen messages and their dissemination ultimately motivating change. The national positive parenting brand will then be utilized by different stakeholders to ensure resonance and common identity for all communication interventions.

A consensus emerged from the discussion that there was need for a brand that can achieve a culturally iconic status, a brand that can provide a sense of community for those adopting the new normative framework of positive parenting. This brand should help resolve the contradictions of society and offer a solution by representing a new way of being.

Usually an effective communication process goes beyond facts and figures to connect with people on the level of their deeply held values, the principles and standards that guide how they think the world should work. Too often, stakeholders communicating about a issue get stuck at the awareness raising level. Not moving past this stage can limit the success of such initiatives because inundating people with facts and figures may not shift their thinking without more in depth approaches, especially if those facts are out of sync with their underlying beliefs. Voicing the reference values helps people connect with the issue, recognize its importance and, ultimately, motivates them to act.

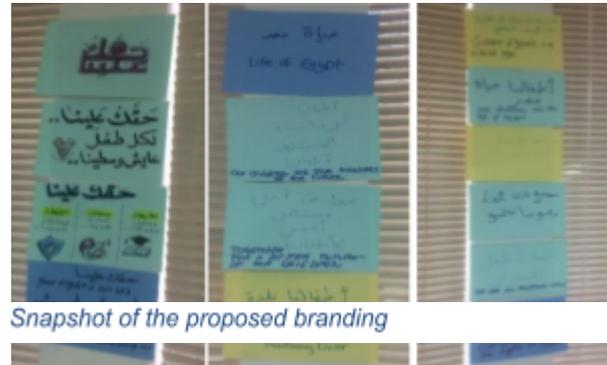


Participants agreed on the main values for positive parenting

Identifying core values associated with positive parenting within Egyptian culture is essential to determine the initiative’s brand identity.

Participants engaged in a participatory exercise to identify shared values motivating positive parenting related behaviours. Loving Care and nonviolent communication with an emphasis on love emerged as core reference values. Though a visioning exercise potential branding ideas were suggested as follows:

- we owe you a right
- [children are] the life of Egypt
- Our children are the treasures of Egypt
- Together for a better future for our children
- Our children are our life
- The golden years
- Our children are the life of Egypt
- Let us grow
- We are all the Egyptian the Egyptian child
- Our children are the light of Egypt



9.2 Partnerships

Establishing ongoing working relationships where risks and benefits are shared that endures over time rather than one that is one-sided and/or time-bound clearly emerged as a priority to strengthen the envisaged systemic approach. The discussion converged on partnerships with media and private sector.

9.3 Media

Successful media partnerships help ensure a wider audience is engaged through combining communication channels. Partnerships with print, radio and digital media are full of potentials. Nevertheless, based on Egyptian media preferences and access, it is evident that TV has the greatest potential for filling the pronounced gap in mass media and Egyptian culture in general when it comes to depicting positive approaches to parenting young children and reaching parents and influencers throughout the country, across class, geographic and cultural lines.

Usually media partnerships entail different levels of engagement that go from editorial support to campaigning, marketing and advertisement. A few recommendations for successful media partnerships agreed from the discussion, include:

- It is essential to always ensure there are benefits for both parties. For example, using your unique content to help drive traffic to a partner’s website.
- Working with the editorial team as part of the negotiation process is an important factor to establish the boundaries of what will be created by the media outlet and what can be supplied by the Positive Parenting Initiative.
- Capacity building for content producers and journalists is an essential step of a media partnership.
- Free air time, brand visibility, endorsement of values, granting presenters and/or celebrities as ambassadors of the proposed behaviours, networking opportunities, and co-branding are few of the options to activate a media partnership.

9.4 Private Sector Engagement

One component of the workshop was dedicated entirely to consultation with the Private Sector. Reflecting on how to mainstream positive parenting within the Egyptian society, the following were identified as opportunities for Private Sector Engagement.

Overall Egyptian companies are highly interested in using their business core, technologies, and business solutions to support children and youth development despite limited budget availability for development interventions. In other words, Egypt aligns with the global trend that see the private sector increasingly seeking to encourage customers to act on social issues.

Looking deeper into partnership opportunities with the private sector several specific areas of cooperation were identified and elaborated by the corporate entities attending the workshop:

1. In-Kind Support for Positive Parenting/ECD interventions and Campaign
2. Financial Support for Positive Parenting promotion & ECD interventions
3. Direct/Volunteer Engagement in Positive Parenting promotion & ECD interventions
4. Promoting and Ensuring Adherence of standards to protect ECD interests
5. Coordination, Advocacy, Promotion & Recognition of Private Sector Engagement

The aim of the Private Sector Positive Parenting and ECD Partnership will be to integrate the above five modes of engagement as relevant across all priority components to be implemented within the strategic communication for development and programming initiative. The matrix below summarises examples of private sector contribution to the 360degree multi-media and inter-personal communication which emerged from the different working groups.

Strategic Communication Interventions /Activities	Possible Private Sector Contributions
1. MULTI – MEDIA ENGAGEMENT	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professional branding exercise building on preliminary ideas generated during stakeholder workshop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pro-bono audience research on triggers and motivators to inform branding for the initiative. ● Incorporation of Brand and messages of campaign within appropriate private sector media advertising. ● Incorporation of campaign logo, tagline and short thematic messages as part of traditional Art and Craft items of Egypt. ● Production and publication of stories around the key positive parenting messages.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Production of Public Service Announcements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sponsorship of production costs ● Provision of studio editing facilities ● Graphics ● Translation to Arabic ● Sign language for parents/children with disabilities ● Training for public speaking/hosting ● Clothing outfits for Celebrities ● Support packaging/printing of music/print material.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engagement of Celebrities, Champions, Ambassadors 	
<p>Production of Edu-tainment media components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporation of messages in existing media programmes (eg. Sesame Street). ● Production of Radio Programmes ● Production of TV Drama ● Production of TV Drama extensions: Eg. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full-length feature film - Documentaries ● Production of Music Videos with celebrities ● Development of print material to reinforce messages of edu-tainment programmes 	
<p>Positive Parenting Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Activations” for PR Campaign ● Media Show Premiere Events ● “Road Shows” with Cast members from TV drama ● Annual Awards for Positive Parenting and for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design and printing of promotional material eg. FAQ cards ● Signage/décor ● In-Kind Prizes

Parenting Education Programmes	
<p>Social Media and Positive Parenting App</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop bank of e-learning material ● Facilitate capture of positive ECD examples from communities ● Facilitate peer-to-peer interaction linked to ECD web-platform ● Facilitate engagement in TV and Radio (eg. voting and polling). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support access to and curation of indigenous forms of early childhood caregiving practices eg. Indigenous food and food preparation, games, songs, folklore, proverbs that can have value to promoting local positive parenting practices (to be undertaken in collaboration with Min. of Culture and University Pioneer initiative).

In conclusion, it was agreed that the Private Sector, through its coordinating structures eg. the Egypt Chamber of Commerce can as a collective champion investment in the early years by partnering with the government in multi-sectoral action that will support systemic change. The Chamber of Commerce also has a pivotal role to play in working with UNICEF and other partners to help convene private sector companies for continuing fora for awareness raising and exchange and to document and hold joint events that promote and recognize private sector developments and supports for Positive Parenting and ECD in Egypt.

9.5 Coalition Building and the Way Forward

Workshop participants acknowledged the importance of establishing a coalition of stakeholders willing to support the implementation on the proposed road map for the strategic communication framework. Participants highlighted the importance of a continuing coordination role to be played by UNICEF. It was noted that UNICEF's central engagement in the national ECD programme will facilitate linkages between private media entities and government Ministries to ensure technical alignment of media content with government policies and standards and related administrative facilitation to ensure the agile process required for optimal media functioning.

The goal of the proposed strategic communication coalition for positive parenting will be to establish a cadre of informed and supportive local and government partners working cohesively that can provide guidance, technical assistance and strategic advice to the positive parenting initiative, to advance the goals of the National ECD programme and ensure that the communications activities are culturally and logistically appropriate to different audience segments as they stimulate effective responses to positive parenting. A subset of the group will serve as the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), to help review and refine materials.

The Coalition will also contribute to the formative research which includes a review of legal frameworks, analysis of existing behavioural and socio-cultural research and identification of the gaps in understanding of the context surrounding parenting behaviours. The baseline research will be conducted using a range of methods including focus groups and interviews with different participant groups in multiple regions to develop a full understanding of the social norms, obstacles and motivating behaviours that must be addressed in the communication processes established by the Positive Parenting Initiative.

Experience from around the world has shown that among the available options for collaborative engagement, building coalitions is one of the most effective ways of achieving common objectives. There are many ways that individuals and groups can work together toward realizing a shared vision and attaining common goals. They can share information, organize joint activities, and collaborate on setting-up an organization to further programmatic objectives. Overall coalition building requires tackling several challenges, one of which is getting the communication dimension right. Communication efforts that both build trust, especially during early formative stages, and leverage diversity, to make the most of a coalition's broad membership have been identified as key priorities for the coalition building process.

The participants identified the following priority steps to strengthen the coalition initiated at the workshop:

- Establish a recurring information-sharing and planning forum initially coordinated by UNICEF;
- Identify an institutional coordination mechanisms for the road map implementation within the NCCM;
- Facilitate the production of standard tools which can be adopted by different stakeholders.