

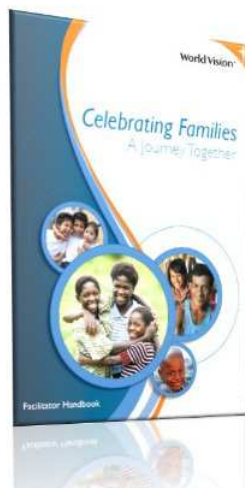
Celebrating Families: A Journey Together

Scaling a Successful Tool to Increase Impact towards Sustained Holistic Wellbeing of Children



What is Celebrating Families?

Celebrating Families is a tool World Vision developed in 2011 to support parents and caregivers in the creation of a family and community environment that foster children's spiritual development and overall well-being.



Celebrating Families includes a 3 and a half day workshop and an accompanying curriculum that offers participants the opportunity to take part in simple activities that provide spaces for deep self-reflection and growth.

The workshop and the curriculum encourages participants (parents/caregivers) to revisit their past and understand their own childhood stories and experiences and how it has had an impact on how they are raising their own children now. It also gives participants the opportunity to come up with wise choices as they seek to become aware and be respectful of the different roles, identities and realities of each of their family members.

Celebrating Families seeks to ensure that families WV serve enjoy positive and loving relationships, is able to have hope and vision for the future and becomes one of the factors that will allow children to experience the love of God.

Celebrating Families (CF) is an important resource for the Spiritual Nurture of Children (SNC).

Spiritual nurture of children (SNC) is an important expression of our Christian identity, witness and commitment to a holistic approach to transformational development.

In the recent years we have seen SNC create opportunities for WV to have an impact not only on the lives of the children, but also on their parents, caregivers, faith leaders and our own staff. We recognise that children are not raised in isolation but are a part of families, villages, and communities of faith. We thought that if we are truly to have a ministry that changes lives, we must connect to these circles of love and care. We often work with children, but sometimes neglect parents and caregivers. Celebrating Families is an important resource that attempts to fill some of these gaps.

Through listening to children, we understood that it is necessary for children to have surroundings/environment where they feel loved and free to explore and discover God. We also know that the nurture that children experience from caregivers– or the lack of that love and care – builds their understanding of God. For example, when children are treated justly, with tenderness, kindness and love, it is easier for them to see God as just, tender, kind and loving. However, when children are abused or neglected by those who are closest to them, they may fear that God is like that.

We recognise parents as the primary providers of all nurture for children, including spiritual nurture. By partnering with and supporting parents as they create a protective and loving environment for children, we can affect how children learn to think about God.

Why choose to use Celebrating Families?

- The CF curriculum is based on the results of listening exercises (focus group discussions) with over 600 children and over 500 fathers and mothers in 6 countries—Cambodia, Mali, Uganda, Nicaragua, Philippines, and Albania – it responds to the issues and realities of our very own communities. It is created by World Vision for World Vision.
- The material was pilot tested several times in various contexts (predominantly Christian, mixed faith context, urban, rural), in various levels (global, regional, national and ADP level) and with various audiences (staff, faith leaders, churches, youth, and community volunteers with various educational capacities) and it works!
- Participants who have gone through the curriculum has been able to replicate the module and have used it for other purposes such as staff formation material, bible study material, and even as a child protection tool (as done by WV Mongolia)
- CF makes an important contribution to the achievement of WV's four child well-being aspirations. By creating a safe and loving environment for children, they are in a better position to do better in school, because they are not distracted by violence and conflict at home. CF also helps improve relationships in the home which has implications on gender, child protection, health, and participation (see more details on this below)
- In sensitive contexts, like WV Afghanistan, CF provides a space and an open door to discuss issues such as child protection or rights for children which would otherwise be difficult to discuss openly
- Organizing CF workshops does not cost a lot. It only involves printing the module and purchasing locally available materials (blank papers, flip charts, coloured cards, notebooks, markers...etc.) for the participants to use. The content creators (from WV) do not charge any fee for the usage of the materials.

How Celebrating Families contribute to the achievement of WV's Child Well Being Aspirations and more

Celebrating families helps children enjoy good health and educate children for life.

Research has proven that a strong and secure attachment bond with a primary caregiver is at the core of developing resilience and a healthy personality. It strengthens a child's ability to cope with stress, regulates emotions, provides social support, and forms nurturing relationships.¹

By supporting positive parenting, CF workshop is able to address issues of health and education as well. Parents become more aware of the needs of their children and support their need in order to learn and succeed in their academic pursuits.

Paulina's story: "Before attending this CF, I used to be very harsh to my children. For example when I call my daughter, Juliet (with loud voice) and she knows she has done something wrong, the girl will come on her knees trembling, because I was so harsh. But from today, in fact I started to change..... From now on, I want to be a humble and polite mother!"

A female parent testimony: "I have a grandchild who is orphaned and is a bit mentally challenged; I have been scolding and beating him up very much thinking that I am helping him to be a better boy. Instead he started avoiding me, and preferring to stay at our neighbors especially when I am home. Whenever I am around he hides from me, I have been trying to befriend him and bring him closer but he has never been close to me. Now, after going through CF, I know why. I have been mistreating him thinking I am teaching him good manners. I will change my approach from today because I have realized that it is not right for me to do so, may

Celebrating families helps children experience God's love and their neighbours.

Through listening to children, we understand that it is necessary for children to have a safe environment where they feel loved and free to explore and discover God. The home is the best environment for that. By partnering with and supporting parents as they create a protective and loving environment for children, opportunities are opened for children to feel and experience God's love.

Mukandayisaba Bernadette, community volunteer, Rwanda: I am a mother of five children.... Every morning I report at the project, leaving my children at home with assigned activities. Unfortunately, at my arrival back home tired from work, I quarrel, beat up and abused my children without asking them about their struggles and trials they go through. However, in the Celebrating Families Training, I have learned how to treat my children and take care of them for their wellbeing and for my own benefit.I have come to understand the processes that I will use to support my family towards wholeness. I will never again hit or abuse my children

Celebrating families helps ensure that children are cared for, protected and participating.

Celebrating Families contributes to CWBA #4. Several participants testify how this curriculum transformed them as it challenged their long held negative views around child rearing and child discipline. Most participants admit that before attending Celebrating Families training, they used to angrily beat their children, causing physical and psychological trauma. In many cases, the participants are only repeating a pattern of punishment and violence that was modelled for them by their own parents, as

¹ Rutter M. Clinical implications of attachment concepts: retrospect and prospect. J Child Psychol Psychiatry 1995 36(4):549-71. [CrossRefMedline](#)

many of them were beaten or abused as children.

Eva Edward, Tanzania: *I thank God for giving me this opportunity to be part of CF. I have discovered that, many societies including mine are still very far behind concerning how to make families to be a place for parents and children to enjoy the love of God. I have learned to become an example of being close to my family. This training has enabled us to know God more than before. Each member of my family is knows his or her role, something which previously not there. Previously, I thought that me and the entire family are just poor because we are not educated. But after attending CF training, I and my husband have decided to send our children both boys and girls to school because that would be a way of changing the history from the way we were brought up by our parents. Previously, we had no time to seat together as a family, but nowadays, we always have good time with our children to see how they are faring with their studies and have quality time to plan and implement various family issues together.*

development.

Jacline N. Sunguti, Pastor's Wife: *"I myself I have been transformed. I have learned on how to deal with children and their affairs. Also to build my home in a strong foundation that is being a wise parent/wife."*

Participant from Kenya: *"My most significant learning from CF is extending grace to others."*

CF Impacts and Transforms Relationships

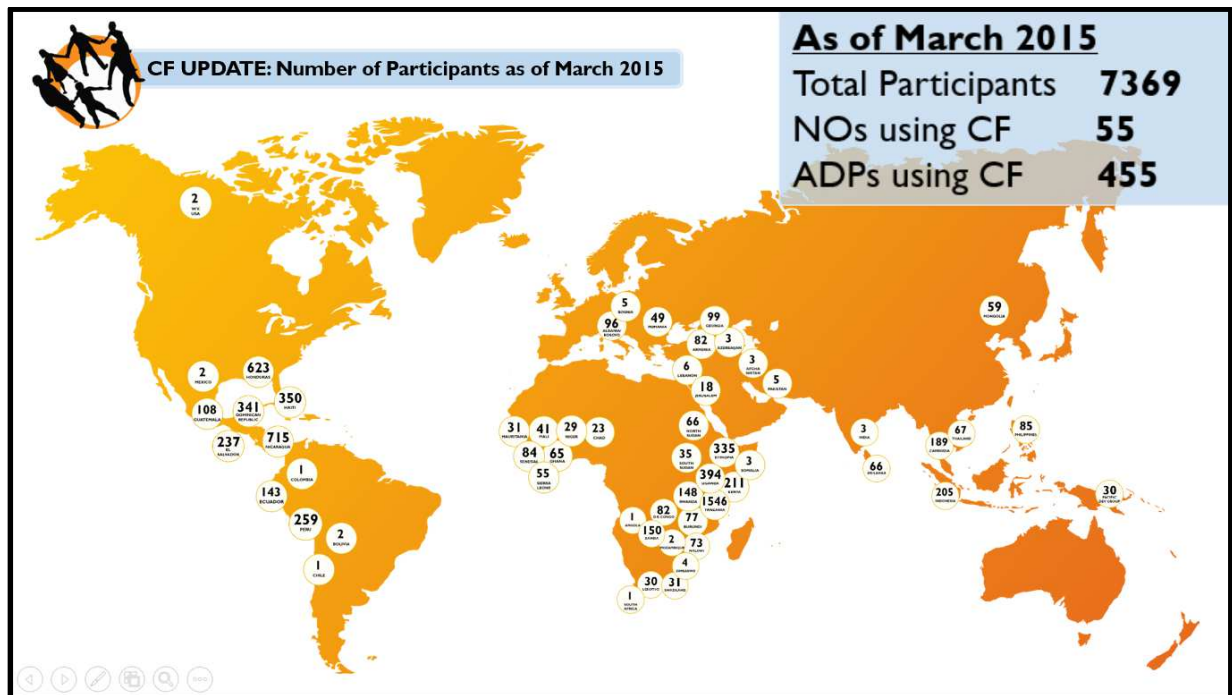
World Vision aims to impact and influence relationships in order to transform individuals, institutions, and restore relationships with God and others. As individuals are transformed through a process like Celebrating Families, they then become catalysts for the transformation of institutions, broken systems, and restored relationships. Church and other faith leaders who have been transformed through their participation in CF are now committed to mobilize their communities to addressing issues related to families, and children's wellbeing.

Muslim Participant from WV Afghanistan: *"Let me say this was really a defining moment of my life. This has helped me to experience such a life changing experience and really I am ashamed if I hesitate to go and offer such a life changing material to others to the parents, to the families, to the larger communities so that it can change, bring peace, tranquillity, and we can't really explain the power of it. But it really helped us to learn more, and I really see the responsibility to now go and share it, offer it, to my family, to my neighbour, to the community that we serve, so that hopefully God will shower his mercy and blessing to all of us so that we all experience peace, joy, and celebrate it together"*

Christopher Mutinda, Pastor, Kenya: *"I can transform many families from this workshop and my community."*

Information on CF Replications Worldwide

As of March 2015, there were a total of 7,369 recorded participants (staff, partners, community parents, faith leaders) who went through CF. CF has so far reached 55 countries and at least 455 ADPs.



Samples of how NOs have been using CF

WV Tanzania

- WV Tanzania Board got excited about CF and created a mandate that CF would be integrated into the National strategy not only for SNC, but also for Child Protection, because instances of child abuse and domestic violence were very high within the country.
- They rolled out CF in over 62 ADPs. Over 2000 facilitators trained across the country.
- The tool has also been adopted by partner organizations that are collaborating with WV Tanzania to achieve CWB.
- CF is also proving to be effective among Muslim communities and is well accepted by their leaders.
- According to reports they have sent, CF helped reduce incidences of child abuse in WVT ADPs.

WV Georgia:

- WV Georgia invited church and media partners in a CF training

- As a result of the training, a TV programme was created based on the CF content, with the involvement of church specialists and WV Georgia CC staff, which was transmitted a number of times on national and church TV channels.
- Programme was viewed by 70,000 families
- Viewers could contact the TV channels during the transmission and get responses to their questions about family and child spirituality matters.
- Follow up was done by WV staff in the communities and church members were trained to follow up with communities as well.
- According to the media partner 98,5% of interviewers noted that the program is reflective of their present realities and “Parents and children” issues are important to discuss. 99% of respondents expressed willingness to continue following the program. 64% of interviewers noted that level of mutual understanding between parents and children is increased while 36% emphasized the positive impact of the TV program.

Other relevant news on CF:

- **WVI SNC Team has developed a process for the Training of Facilitators in Celebrating Families**
- **Indicators with accompanying impact measurement tools specific to Celebrating Families will be available soon in the compendium of indicators**
- **The CF Curriculum is currently being translated in different dialects. For more information of available languages for the curriculum, please contact the SNC Team in the email address indicated below.**

If you are interested to know more about CF, feel free to contact us below:

ekaterina_papadhopuli@wvi.org
Shelly_ShupeWinterberg@wvi.org
nestor_dedel@wvi.org

You are also invited to join the SNC Interest Group by clicking [here](#).