

Combination of “Parenting with tenderness” and “Parenting on the move” in migratory contexts

Successes, challenges, and recommendations

**Save the Children
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INTRODUCTION

As part of the project *'Humanitarian Response to the Protection Needs of Migrant Girls, Boys and Teenagers on the Northern Border of Mexico'*, financed by the Basque Government's Cooperation and Development Aid Fund (FOCAD) (August 2020 to November 2022), SC Spain alongside SC Mexico have developed a series of workshops. These workshops, based on the methodology **"Parenting with tenderness"** (It is a tool to strengthen the bond between fathers, mothers and sons and daughters based on love and respect) and **"Parenting on the Move"**, are aimed at mothers, fathers and caregivers, with the goal of providing support and tools for their journey of parenting in mobility contexts.

When designing these workshops, SC reviewed the objectives of ***Parenting on the Move (PoM)***¹ and the elements it shared with the ***Crianza con Ternura (CcT)***² translated as **Parenting with tenderness**. This was done in an effort to compare the two methodologies taking the best from each of them, produce an **improved strategy which had been tried and tested, and had the potential to be replicated in other countries**.

This resulted in the development of the ***"Programme of parenting without violence in migratory contexts"***. It consists of 11 sessions, which included the most relevant aspects of CcT and PoM, such as CcT's methodology and/or innovative elements like psychoemotional support, and PoM's parenting routines.

The objective of this document is to gather the **key findings** of the combination of "Parenting with tenderness" and "Parenting on the move" in migratory contexts. It also seeks to **improve the quality of its implementation** in the context of Mexican migration, based on good practices and lessons learned.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to prepare this document was in two phases. Firstly, a working session was held (15/01/2022), whereby those who were involved in Save the Children Spain and Save the Children Mexico participated. During this session, the challenges, lessons, and good practices of both "Parenting with tenderness" and "Parenting on the Move" programmes were identified.

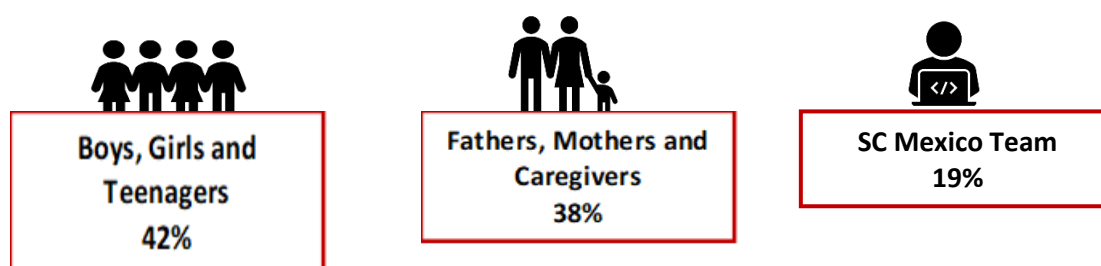
¹ PoM. Programme to empower and promote the development of parental skills for children up to 12 years of age in migration situations or upholding refugee status.

² CcT. Tool to develop relations between parents and children based on love and respect, especially when disciplining or correcting behaviour.

The second phase began by designing a data collection tool³ with different sections aimed at mothers, fathers, caregivers; younger children and teenagers; and the promotions team. It also integrated the main elements from the “.

In the process of collecting data from the latter half of April 2022, three different groups participated. These groups were comprised of boys, girls and teenagers; mothers, fathers and caregivers; and the Save the Children team. Twenty-one surveys were carried out in two shelters located in Tijuana, Baja California⁴: 9 boys, girls and teenagers, 8 MFC and 4 SC Mexico advocates. The main purpose was to understand, from the perspective of the various actors involved, the scope and results of the implemented program.

Working Group Respondents

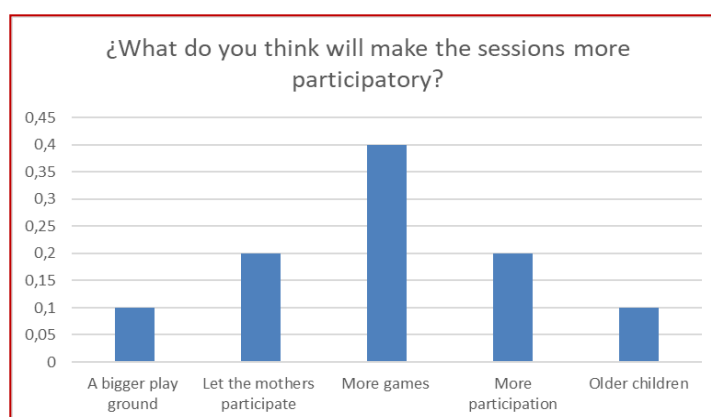


RESULTS

Boys, Girls and Teenagers

Firstly, 100% of the children indicated that participating in the activities **made them feel happier**. They also stated that they liked the activities offered by SCM.

To improve the activities, the children proposed the following suggestions (found in the adjacent chart):



On the other hand, 87% of the children and teenagers mentioned that they felt protected by their family. This highlights that **67% believe that their mothers treat them better since they have been in the shelter**, while the other 33% found that their treatment remains

³ Questionnaire can be found at: <https://ee.humanitarianresponse.info/x/7wC0SDzX>

⁴ 21 people were interviewed: 13 from the Border Line Crisis Center shelter and 8 from Little Haití

unchanged. Half of those who noticed an **improvement in the treatment attributed it to the sessions that their mothers had with Save the Children**. The remaining respondents did not indicate a reason; however, they highlighted noticeable changes, such as **more patience and a willingness to listen**.

Mothers, Fathers and Caregivers

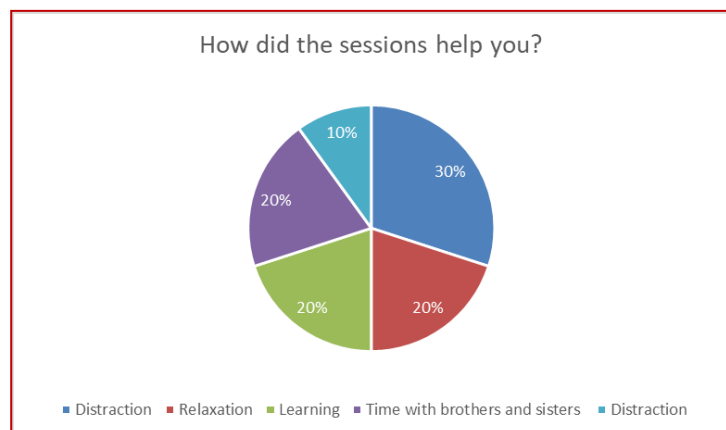
Mothers, fathers and caregivers stated that the least favourable aspects were the workspace and the delayed delivery of workbooks. However, the features they liked the most included the **relaxation activities**, the **impact** that the topics have had **on their**



familial relationships, and the kindness and attention of the Save the Children team. In the majority of cases, the parents found the workshops particularly useful to **better understand their own emotions and those of the children and teenagers**.

On the other hand, the mothers, fathers and caregivers (MFC) suggested the following **improvements**: creating a quieter workspace, delivering the workbooks on time, and including more exercises to relax and to express their feelings.

Among the topics to continue working with Save the Children, the participants suggested receiving **training/classes in English, vocational orientation, sexuality/ sexual reproductive health, jewellery-making, and other activities that would allow them to earn an income**.

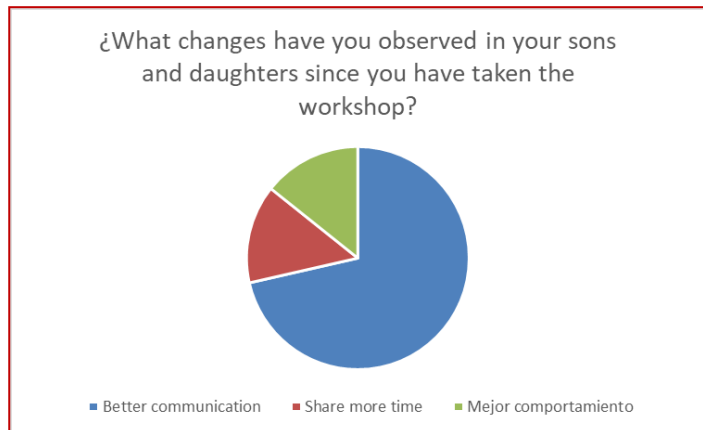


In relation to the noticeable changes in their children, **100% of the parents believe that the workshops have improved the relationship between the children in the shelter, particularly regarding communication and trust**. They feel that the children are more willing to communicate with the adults, especially with their peers – mothers, fathers or caregivers. Furthermore, the MFC's behaviour towards their children has improved and the amount of time they spend together has increased.

Regarding changes specific to mothers, they noticed a **better coexistence**. This resulted in an **increase in the capacity/ patience to face domestic problems and a decline in shouting and crying** in the shelters.

The mothers had a higher rate of continuous participation in the workshops with an average of four sessions. This was found less amongst the fathers as they are generally the ones who leave the shelter to work or search for a job.

In relation to the lessons applied by the MFC, the following conclusions stand out:



100% mentioned that they had put into practice the skills acquired from the workshops. This primarily includes: 1) **Actively listening** to children and teenagers 2) **relaxation techniques** 3) **key concepts** of parenting on the move



50% mentioned that, as a result of the activities, **the fathers (men) have been more involved in the raising of their children.** However, one of the challenges identified is to ensure that men continue to attend the sessions.

Save the Children Team

The programme's sessions were divided as follows: welcome, introduction, initial relaxation exercise, main topic, final relaxation exercise, feedback, and conclusion. The SC team felt that the topics were well received by the shelter's population, especially because it allowed them to relax while also improving the relationship dynamics with the children and teenagers.

The SC team suggested that the sessions needed to be adapted to the shelter's context (adequate spaces). They also felt that it was important to have all of the material for the session on time.

The main challenges faced by the team were the following: 1) **inadequate space** to carry out the sessions due to an excess of outside distractions; 2) **low attendance rates** per session; 3) **conflicting timetables** as the sessions coincided with other activities organised by the shelters; and 4) **maintaining health and safety** during the session - both in relation to the participants and the operations team.

Among the main results, they point out that **the sessions were very well received** and that **those who attended had an improved relationship with the children and teenagers.**

They also highlighted **the importance of consulting** adults about issues that they would like to work on for personal development, such as migration, work, stress management, etc.

CHALLENGES AND DIFFICULTIES

- Given that the project took place in transitory spaces (migratory context), there is a **high rate of participant turnover**. This makes the attendance, monitoring and evaluation of the modules' content difficult.
- Initially, the participants did not show any interest in taking part in the workshops. **The low attendance rates** remained constant throughout. Despite this, according to the programme's final survey, 92% of the MFC that attended the "***Programme of parenting without violence in migratory contexts***" workshops stated that they allowed them to increase their knowledge regarding the emotional support for children and teenagers in migratory circumstances.
- The **women** had the highest attendance rates at the workshops, accounting for 70% of the participation – compared to 30% of their male counterparts. **They stated that they did not want to leave their sleeping areas in case their personal belongings were stolen**. This made it **difficult for them to participate** in the workshops.
- According to the project's design and initial planning, the intervention would be based on the methodologies of CcT and PoM. However, the materials and tools used were in other languages (Arabic and English), and they were only translated into Spanish after the start of the sessions.
- The **application of longitudinal measurement instruments** and evaluations were **inadequate** for the conditions of the target population. This, in turn, cannot be considered valid as they placed excessive work on the team in the field.

SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES

- It was important to hold **conversations in advance of the workshops** in order to inform the participants about the session's objective and, therefore, improve the quality of their participation.
- As part of the methodology, a work booklet was designed which has been widely accepted by the population. This proved extremely useful when carrying out practical exercises. The **content of the work booklet was modified so that the sessions were flexible, non-sequential**, allowing them to be constantly adapted to the needs of the mothers, fathers and caregivers.
- The modification of the content was accompanied by **monitoring, evaluation and learning tools** so that it was user- friendly for the workshop participants.

- A tool was designed with the aim of identifying the **satisfaction level of the sessions that were held in a workshop-format**. This allowed the information to be gathered in a user-friendly way.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The results suggest that the adaption of PoM and CcT for the ***"Programme of parenting without violence in migratory contexts"*** has been useful for the participants. However, the **migration context poses significant challenges for the implementation of the programme**.
- **It is crucial to carry out a diagnosis and a situational analysis** prior to implementing activities within the shelters. This is needed in order to propose **activities that are in accordance with the environmental reality and the personal development interests of the participants**.
- To address the lack of involvement of fathers (males), it would be important to include **strategies specifically aimed at encouraging their participation**.
- Before carrying out the programme's sessions, it is crucial to **ensure** that the **workshop spaces are suitable and safe**, while also **taking into account the shelter's schedules**.
- The ***"Programme of parenting without violence in migratory contexts"*** must pay attention to the **duration of time that the participants are in the shelters**. In turn, it should adapt the sessions to this given that, on certain occasions, they do not have the opportunity to complete extensive modules. It is important to **prioritise one session per module** once it has been established that people are in constant rotation. This allows the activities to be adjusted according to the participants' context and needs.
- Identify **alternatives for the adaption and application of data collection instruments that do not seek to increase knowledge and practices**. This is needed because the mobility context does not allow constant intervention nor the measurement of impact.