

# Nurturing care framework progress report 2018-2023

REFLECTIONS AND LOOKING FORWARD



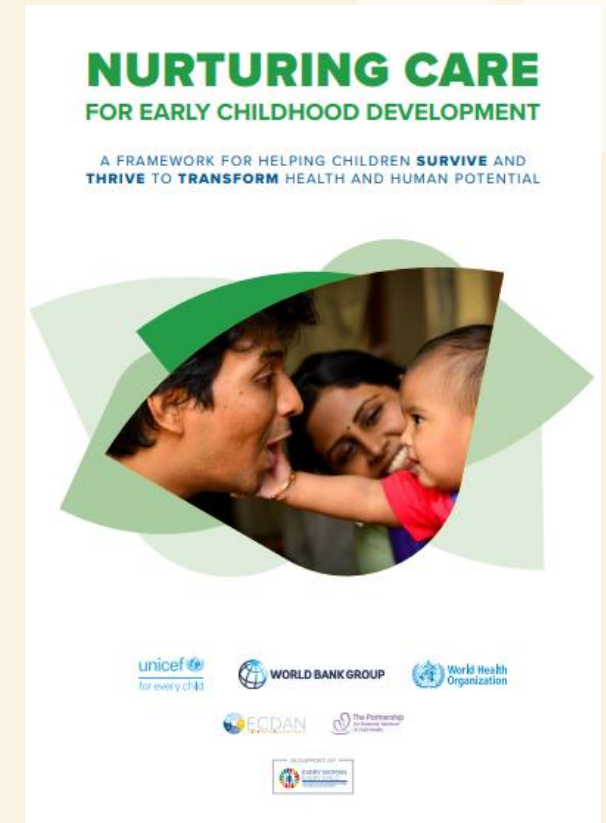
# Global Progress in implementing the Nurturing Care Framework

Boniface Kakhobwe



# Our questions

- How has the concept of nurturing care influenced policy and strategy by governments and partners?
- How have the five strategic actions proposed in the Framework been translated into actions at global, regional and country levels?
- How has the Framework influenced the global child health agenda?



# Methodology

- Interviews with **110 key informants** with a wide range of stakeholders based in **30 countries**.
- A robust **literature review** of technical reports, policy-related documents, published and grey literature, case studies and meeting notes.
- A rapid survey of **51 randomly-selected low and middle-income countries** and areas, with sampling proportional to region.



Supported by an Advisory Committee

# A snapshot of achievements 2018 to 2023



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FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Diverse stakeholders from multiple sectors **came together** to improve child development outcomes and create enabling environments for nurturing care.

Wider recognition exists of **ECD as an outcome**, not a specific programme or intervention.

Profiles for ECD have been developed for **197 countries** and are regularly updated.

**More than 80%** of countries and areas responding to a rapid survey reported that frontline workers were trained to strengthen caregivers' capacity to provide their children with responsive care and opportunities for early learning.

Digital traffic on the nurturing care website **increased by 650%** and continues to rise.

The concept of nurturing care was extended across the **first two decades of life**, articulating the health and well-being needs of children and adolescents.

The number of low- and middle-income countries with a national policy or action plan for ECD **increased by 48%**. Many new policies give attention to all components of nurturing care.

The **central role of the family** in creating a stimulating, safe and secure environment for young children is well recognized and includes attention to caregiver mental health and well-being.

Meetings were held with **nearly 1000 stakeholders from over 40 countries** to facilitate understanding of the Framework and agree on actions to advance nurturing care in each context.

**Over 570 scholarly articles** cited the Framework. Emerging findings are helping to build an evidence base on scaling up and innovation for nurturing care.

The *Early childhood development index 2030* and *Global scales for early development* marked an exciting **milestone in measuring and monitoring** children's development at population level.

**Over 30 resources** were developed to support operationalization of the Framework.

# Three strategic shifts

The Framework has:

- put emphasis on the youngest children
- put a spotlight on the health sector
- put caregivers at the centre of nurturing care

... reframed ECD as  
an outcome



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# Key finding #1

## NCF established a globally accepted conceptual framework

- The NCF created a **clear and widely acceptable goal and shared language** for early childhood development. It established:
  - ✓ a clear mandate for buy-in from multiple sectors
  - ✓ new focus on responsive caregiving
  - ✓ programme priorities for children under 3
- In turn, the NCF strengthened **alignment and coordination** for policy and programming processes at multiple levels:
  - ✓ across sectors and organizations
  - ✓ within organizations (internally)
  - ✓ across the lifespan



# Key finding #2

## NCF informed vital policy processes (and “got them on the right track”)

- Notable efforts have been directed at policy planning (strategic action #1), which some view as a precursor for actions in the other NCF strategic areas.

The number of low- and middle-income countries with a national policy or action plan for ECD increased **by 48%**. Many new policies give attention to all components of nurturing care.



BOX 2. SELECTED EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL POLICIES AND PLANS THAT INTEGRATE NURTURING CARE

<b>Belize</b> ECD National Strategic Plan 2017-2021	<b>Malta</b> National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care 2021
<b>Bhutan</b> National Multi-Sectoral Early Childhood Care and Development Strategic Action Plan 2021-2030	<b>Mexico</b> Estrategia Nacional de Atención a la Primera Infancia [National Strategy for Integrated ECD] 2020-2024
<b>Cambodia</b> National Action Plan on Early Childhood Care and Development 2022-2026	<b>Nepal</b> National Strategy for ECD 2020-2030
<b>El Salvador</b> Crecer Juntos [Grow Together Policy] 2020-2030	<b>Philippines</b> National Early Childhood Care and Development Strategic Plan 2019-2030
<b>Iraq</b> National Strategy for ECD 2022-2031	<b>Congo</b> Politique Nationale de Développement Intégré de la Petite Enfance [National Policy for Integrated ECD] 2022-2030
<b>Kiribati</b> ECD Policy 2022-2032	<b>United Republic of Tanzania</b> National Multisectoral ECD Programme 2021-2026
<b>Malawi</b> National Strategic Plan for Integrated ECD 2018-2023	<b>Vanuatu</b> National Policy for ECD 2023-2027

# Key finding #3

## NCF contributed to strengthening aspects of service provision

- Two common programme areas include:
  - Rapid uptake of **responsive caregiving**, **early learning** and other parenting interventions. Focused on strengthening health/nutrition workforce to support caregiver capabilities.
  - Giving more attention to monitoring early childhood development and early intervention for delays and disability.
- Additional areas of common interest related to NCF include **small and sick newborns**, **caregiver mental health**, **humanitarian contexts**, and **climate change**.

### Stories of change

#### BELIZE

Mainstreaming the Care for child development approach and supporting regional uptake

#### BANGLADESH

Strengthening the capacity of caregivers to responsively feed through nutrition services

#### INDIA, KENYA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Strengthening capacity and mentoring through paediatric associations

#### UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Using digital tools to train and support frontline workers



# Key finding #4

## Promising initiatives & progress made in other strategic areas

### Monitor progress

- Measures for assessing early childhood development in children 24 – 59 months and 0 – 36 months of age.
- Country profiles of valid and reliable indicators aligned with the Framework.
- Monitoring systems aligned with national ECD policies and strategies in countries.

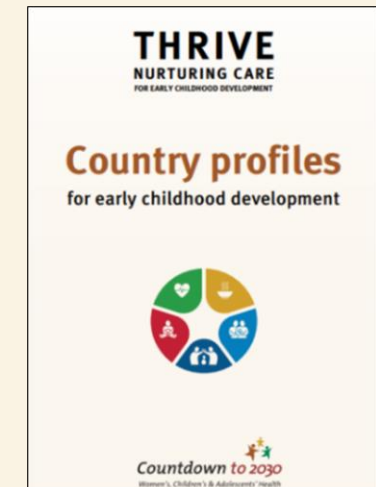


### Data and innovation

- Digital innovations that can be scaled to support caregivers in providing nurturing care.
- Family-friendly policy initiatives and private sector engagement.

### Focus on families and their communities

- Engagement of community workers, media, fathers, and mothers in the design and implementation of programmes and interventions.



# Key finding #5

## Common challenges

- Translating and operationalizing the NCF into sustainable practice.
- Coordination across sectors and between levels of government.
- Financial resources to implement (donor dependent).
- Data and evidence to monitor progress.
- Health system capacity and healthcare worker burden/capabilities.
- Health sector engagement.

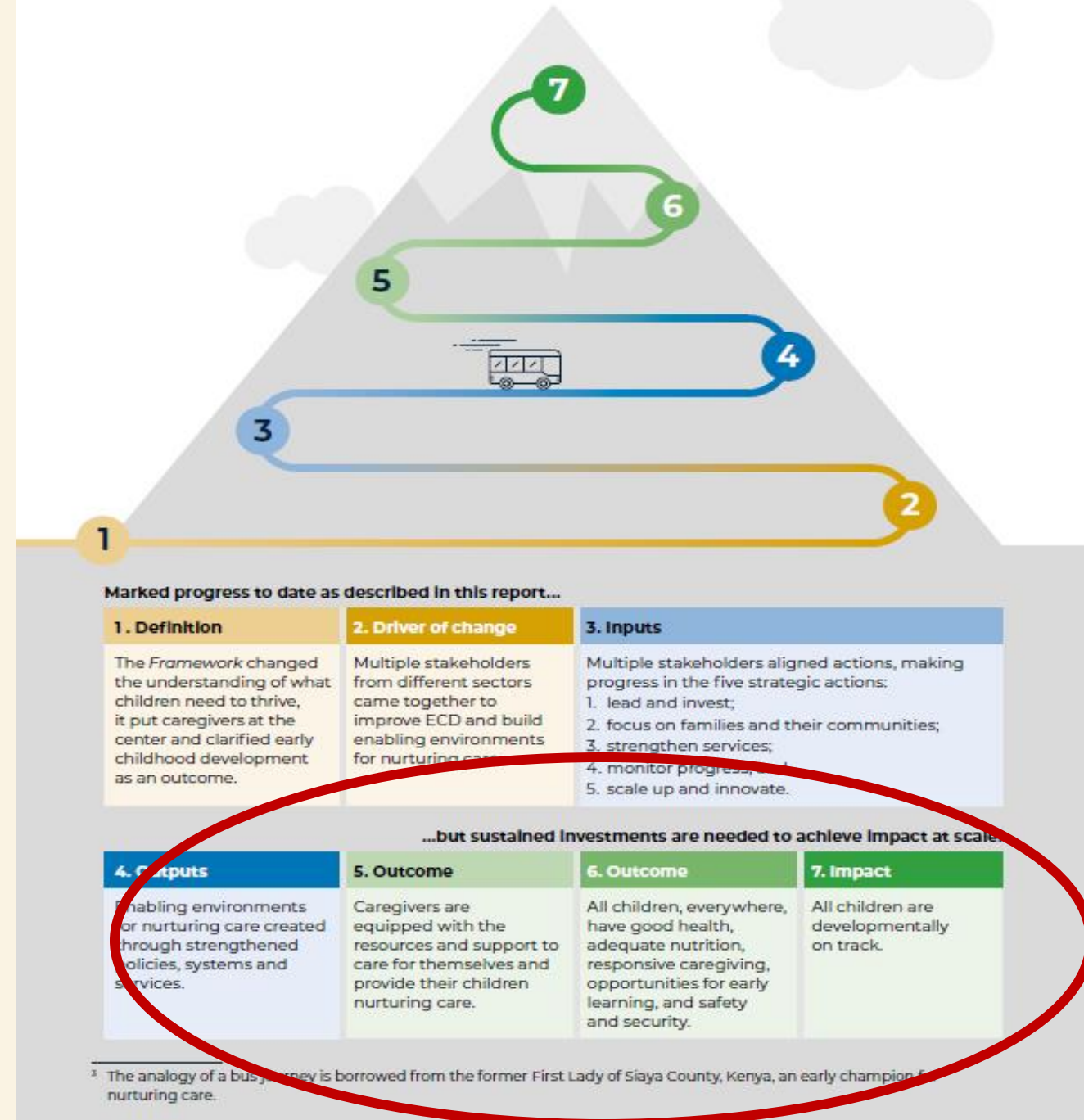


Photo credit:  
Aga Khan Development Network/J-L. Ray

# Looking forward

- Ongoing attention to each of the strategic actions will further strengthen the enabling environments for nurturing care so that caregivers can care for themselves and ensure every child receives nurturing care.
- Sustained investments are needed to achieve impact at scale.

FIG. 5. THE PATH TO PROGRESS<sup>2</sup>



# Areas that merit further attention



- Deepen coordination and collaboration mechanisms
- Strengthen policies and plans
- Improve public financing



- Involve families and communities in the design of policies and programmes
- Cultivate local champions and use multimedia



- Build a workforce fit for purpose
- Strengthen systems to provide care according to need



- Use data to inform planning, budgeting and programming
- Measure individual and collective impact



- Implement feasible, sustainable and scalable solutions
- Use implementation research

# Thanks



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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nurturing care website:

<https://nurturing-care.org/>

Nurturing care framework progress report:

<https://nurturing-care.org/progress-report-2023/>

