



**Global
Parenting
Initiative**



Mahidol University
Institute for Population
and Social Research



**Going to the movies to reduce violence against children?
Development and cluster randomized trial of a universal
film intervention to reduce violence against children
on the Thailand-Myanmar border**

July 2, 2024

Overview



- Violence against children in conflict and displacement settings
- The Global Parenting Initiative
- Study context: Thailand-Myanmar border
- Film intervention: Being Family
- Cluster randomized trial: main findings
- Strengths and limitations
- Implications and discussion



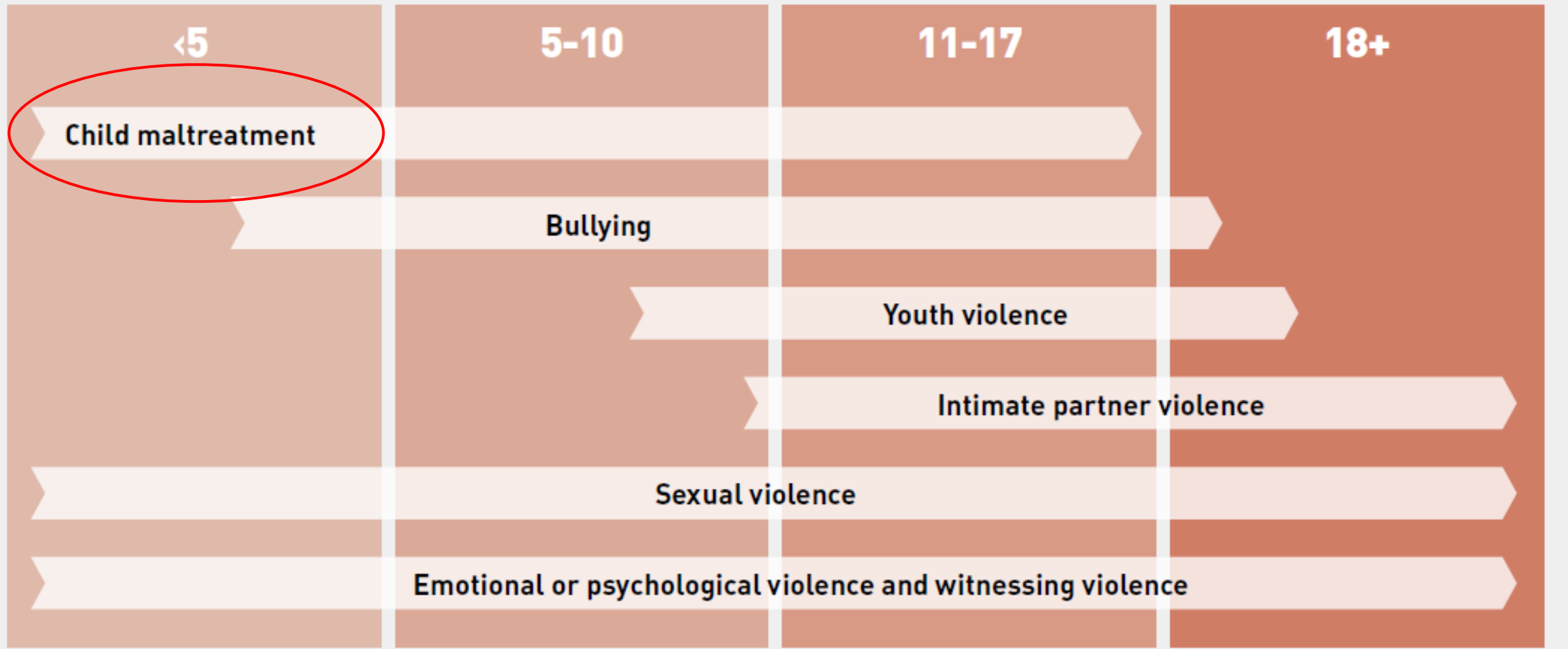
**1 out of 2 children or 1 billion children
suffer some form of violence each year.**

**The most common perpetrators of
physical and emotional violence for both
boys and girls across a range of ages are
household members.**

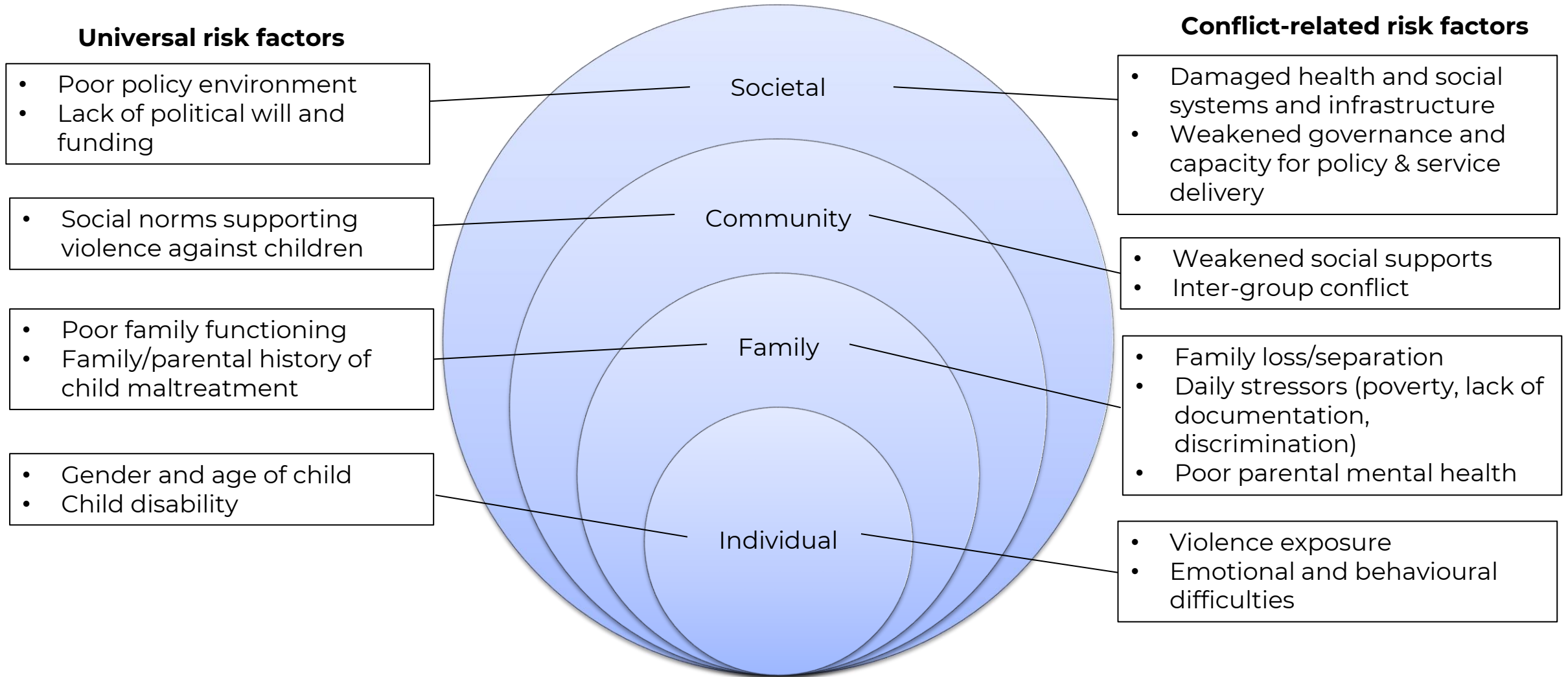
Child maltreatment spans all developmental stages



Figure 2: Type of violence by age group affected.



Layers of risk in conflict and displacement contexts



Devastating impacts over the life course



POTENTIAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

In some children, violence can lead to severe, lifelong health consequences.



- INJURY**
Internal injury, Head injury, Fractures, Burns
- NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND RISK BEHAVIOURS**
Stroke, Diabetes, Cancer, Chronic lung disease, Heart disease, Obesity
- COMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND RISK BEHAVIOURS**
Alcohol and drug abuse, Smoking, Physical inactivity, Unsafe sexual practices, HIV, STDs, Multiple sexual partners
- MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH**
Death (including fetal death), Unintended and adolescent pregnancy, Pregnancy complications
- MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS**
Depression and anxiety, PTSD, Suicide, Assault



Adults who experienced 4 or more childhood adversities (including physical, sexual & emotional abuse) are:

7X

more likely to be involved in interpersonal violence as a victim or perpetrator

.....

30X

more likely to attempt suicide



World Health Organization

unicef
for every child

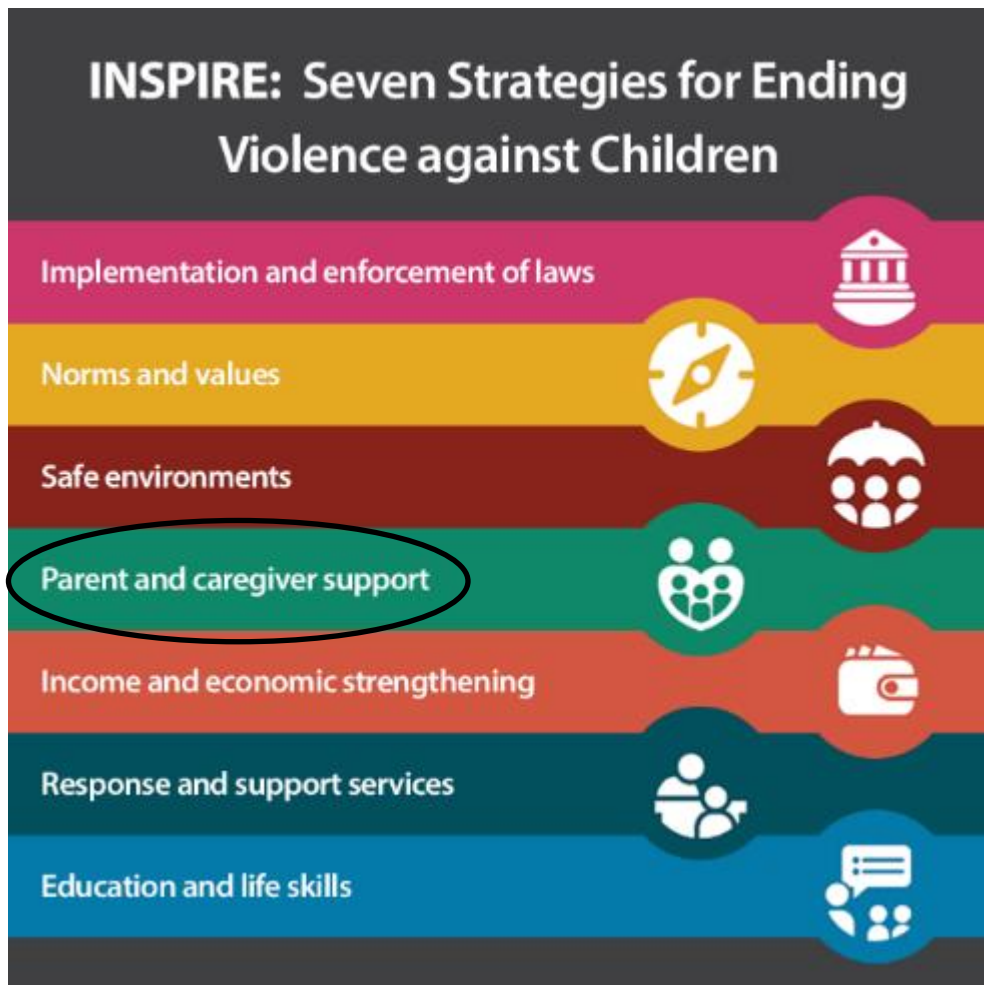


OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN



End Violence Against Children

Parenting and caregiver support



- Parenting interventions are a set of activities or services aimed at improving **parenting knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviours, and practices**
- Strong evidence base: systematic review of 435 randomized controlled trials (RCTs) from 65 countries suggests impacts on parent, child and family outcomes, including **reduction of child maltreatment**
- Bulk of evidence on in-person, individual or group-based, structured/manualised sessions facilitated by specialist/non-specialist providers



Global Parenting Initiative

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Trauma and adversity on the Thailand-Myanmar border



- World's longest running civil conflict in Myanmar
 - 2-3 million migrant and displaced people from Myanmar living in Thailand
- Baseline survey (n=2,250 caregivers):
 - High levels of **trauma, daily adversity,** and **psychological distress**
 - 44% forced to hide or flee their home
 - 78% undocumented; 75% food insecure
 - 67% felt hopeless about the future
 - High levels of **violence against children**
 - 68% of children experienced some form of physical punishment in last 30 days
- Formative qualitative research suggests links between daily stressors, parental mental health, and harsh parenting

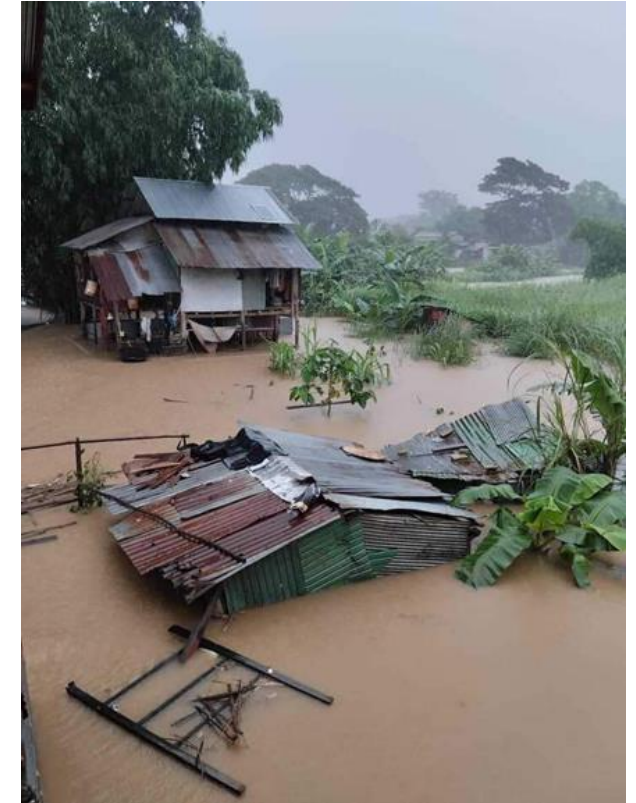


Challenge: How to deliver parenting support at scale?



Implementation context

- Low education/literacy levels (20% of surveyed caregivers had no schooling, 53% primary school only)
- Uneven access to electricity, internet, digital devices
- Safety/security concerns (77% undocumented)
- Limited freedom of movement with high population mobility
- Limited availability of and access to health and social services, including parenting support



Challenging for traditional or digital delivery strategies to achieve population-level reach and impact.

Innovation: Universal film intervention



What is entertainment-education?

- Intentional placement of educational content in entertainment messages
- Evidence of effectiveness as a health communication and behavior change strategy (e.g. youth sexual risk behaviour)¹
- Never been tested to promote positive playful parenting or reduce violence against children in LMICs

Why film?

- Leverages power of storytelling
- Overcomes basic and digital literacy and language barriers
- Potential to achieve economies of scale – population-level reach and impact at low cost

¹Orozco-Olvera, V., Shen, F., & Cluver, L. (2019). The effectiveness of using entertainment education narratives to promote safer sexual behaviors of youth: A meta-analysis, 1985-2017. PLoS One, 14(2), e0209969.

Developing the film “Being Family”



Jun-Aug 2022

Formative Research

18 caregiver and 6 adolescent focus group discussions



Sep-Dec 2022

Script Development

Integrate evidence-based parenting skills and qualitative research



Jan-April 2023

Film Production

All cast and crew were refugees & migrants from Myanmar



May-Sep 2023

Film Screenings

Mobile cinema + 30 min audience discussion & take-home poster with key messages

← Feedback from partners and Community Advisory Group →



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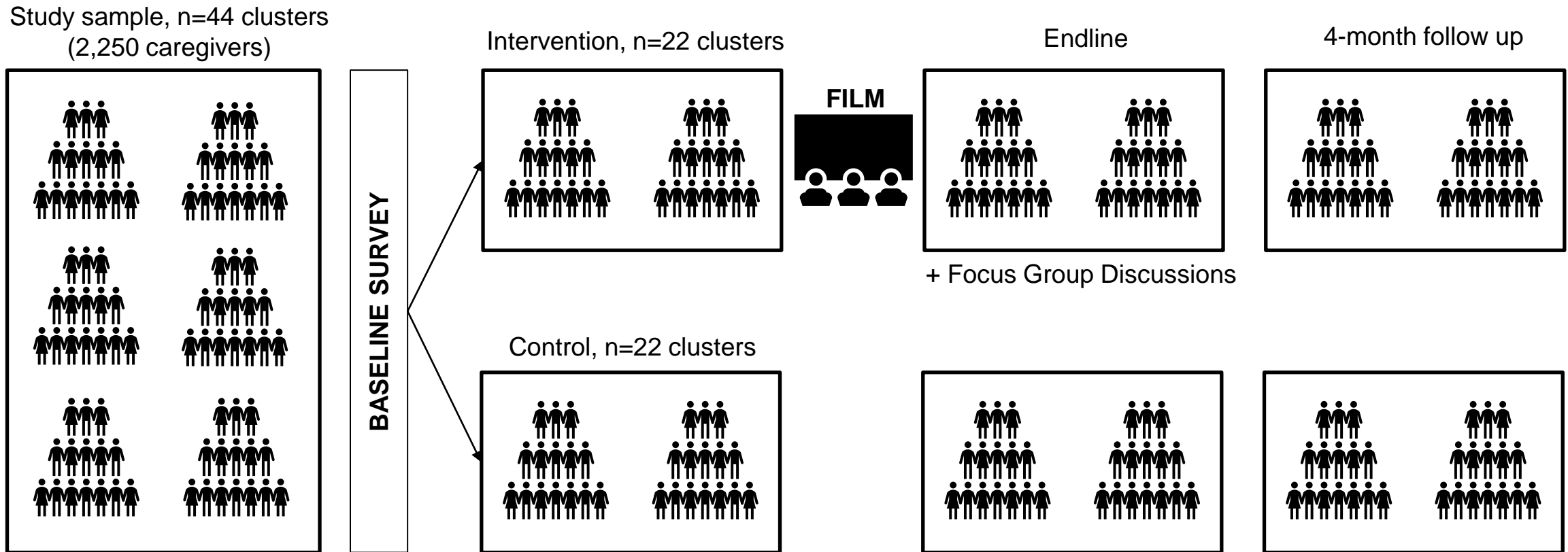


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Pragmatic cluster randomized trial evaluation²



²Sim, A., Jirapramukpitak, T., Eagling-Peche, S., Lwin, K. Z., Melendez-Torres, G. J., Gonzalez, A., ... & Puffer, E. (2023). A film-based intervention to reduce child maltreatment among migrant and displaced families from Myanmar: Protocol of a pragmatic cluster randomized controlled trial. *PLoS one*, 18(10), e0293623.

Results

A new randomised control trial with **2,249 caregivers** in **44 communities** on the Thailand-Myanmar border randomly assigned half to receive the *Being Family* intervention and the other half to receive information about locally available services. Families who participated in the community film screenings engaged in a 30-minute audience discussion and received posters summarising key parenting skills from the film.

Results show that caregivers who received the *Being Family* film intervention had **significant improvements** on multiple parenting and family outcomes compared to the control group.



Increase in

- positive parenting
- caregiver engagement in early learning activities
- parenting knowledge
- social support
- family functioning



Decrease in

- physical violence
- belief in the need for harsh punishment

There were no impacts on psychological violence or exploratory outcomes of educational involvement, coping and stress management, and caregiver and child mental health.

Results from intention-to-treat analysis



The intervention is **feasible, acceptable** (85% uptake and strong fidelity), and **effective** across multiple parenting and family outcomes.

- Reached total of 1,174 adults and 699 children in 22 communities over 4 months

PRIMARY OUTCOMES	SECONDARY OUTCOMES	EXPLORATORY OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in positive parenting at endline and follow-up (effect size 0.09-0.12)• Decrease in physical violence at endline only (ES 0.05)• No impact on psychological violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in parenting knowledge at endline and follow up (ES 0.25-0.27)• Less belief in need for harsh punishment• Increase in family functioning (ES 0.11)• No impact on caregiver psychological distress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in engagement to support early learning at endline* and follow up (ES 0.11-0.16)• Increase in social support – measured at endline only (ES 0.16)• No impacts on educational involvement, coping and stress management, child internalizing and externalizing symptoms

* p=0.085

Comments from the film audience

After seeing the film, I realised how to control my mind and then control my hand that was about to beat the child.

- Female caregiver

While watching the film, my daughter said that not only the parents but also children should watch this film ... there should be a chance for children to discuss what they are feeling and what is going on with them.

- Male caregiver

In the past, my father didn't spend much time with us. He was always busy with work, finding jobs for the next day. Now, it's different. When I get home from school before my father goes to work, he asks, "Son, do you have homework? If there's anything you don't understand, come and tell me." So now, if I have any problems, I go and talk to him.

- Adolescent boy

Strengths and Limitations



Strengths

- Addresses research gaps identified in WHO guidelines on parenting interventions
- Only evaluation of a universal mass media campaign to reduce VAC in low-resource displacement setting (or any LMIC)
- Intervention co-created with families and delivered by local organization
- High uptake of intervention among general population of migrant and displaced caregivers
- Low levels of attrition and missing data

Limitations

- Reliance on caregiver self-reported outcomes (no administrative data and ethical/safety concerns around obtaining child reports)
- Short follow up
- Non-probability community and participant sampling
- Participants and assessors not masked
- Low proportion of male participants (10%)

Summary and ongoing work

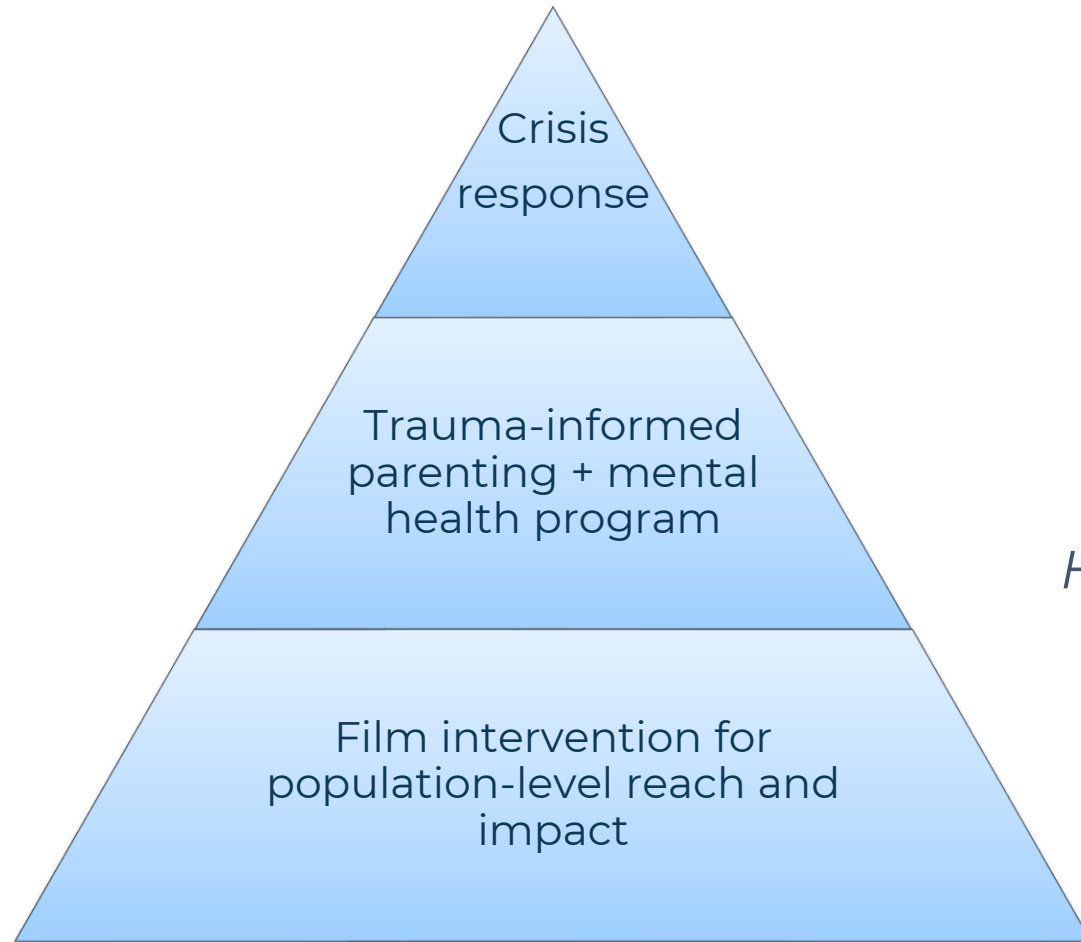


- **First trial** of a universal mass media campaign to promote positive and playful parenting and prevent violence against children in a low-resource setting
- Effect sizes (0.05-0.12) **meet or exceed** 5% benchmark for success of mass media behavior change campaigns³
- **Cost, qualitative** and **moderation/mediation** analyses underway
 - E.g. identification and transportation



³Anker AE, Feeley TH, McCracken B, Lagoe CA. Measuring the effectiveness of mass-mediated health campaigns through meta-analysis. J Health Commun 2016;21:439–56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2015.1095820>

Implications for delivery of parenting and psychosocial support



Universal “light-touch” film interventions can have **population-level impacts on preventing violence against children and promoting positive parenting** in low-resource, high-adversity settings.

How can this approach be leveraged to achieve population-level reach and impact in other settings?

With thanks to our partners and team



Co-PIs: Amanda Sim (siml3@mcmaster.ca), Tawanchai Jirapramukpitak, Sureeporn Punpuing, Eve Puffer
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