

# Global Refugee Forum 2023



## Supporting Parents and Caregivers in Refugee and Displacement Situations

Joint Pledge by the Global Initiative to Support Parents (GISP) and the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (Alliance)



### Background

Experiences of forced displacement due to armed conflict and other humanitarian emergencies can adversely impact the health and wellbeing of caregivers and children alike.<sup>1</sup> While a strong, nurturing relationship with a parent or caregiver can serve as a critical buffer against the worst impacts of a crisis on children, significant threats to caregivers' own mental health and wellbeing can hinder their capacity to positively engage with their children and provide the additional support and care needed during crisis situations.

To mitigate the potentially long-lasting effects of forced displacement on child development, wellbeing, and family functioning, it is vital that refugee parents and caregivers, as well as those in host communities, have access to a range of services and supports that are responsive to their needs as caregivers, including mental health care and psychosocial support.<sup>2</sup> Building on families' existing strengths and prioritizing the wellbeing of parents and caregivers can have a profound influence on how children of all ages experience crises and reduce negative outcomes later in life.

1 Charlson 2019; WHO 2022

2 Eltanamly H, et al. 2021; Bryant et al. 2018; McEwen et al. 2023; Sim et al. 2018

## Leadership

The **Global Initiative to Support Parents (GISP)** is a global platform to catalyze support for parents and caregivers across sectors, across the life course, and across the world. GISP works with governments, UN agencies, researchers, program implementers, and other stakeholders to achieve universal support for parents and caregivers. GISP was initiated by UNICEF, WHO, the Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN), Parenting for Lifelong Health (PLH) at the University of Oxford, and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children. Learn more about the GISP at <https://support-parents.org/>.

Led by War Child Holland, Save the Children and World Health Organisation, the mission of the inter-agency **Family Strengthening Task Force of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (FSTF)** is to ensure that children in humanitarian settings have improved psychosocial wellbeing and are better protected from abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation through a positive, strengthened family environment. Learn more about the task force at <https://alliancecpha.org/en/family-strengthening>.

## Pledge Description

By 2027, GISP and the Family Strengthening Task Force commit to collaborating with national stakeholders to:

- **Support 5 refugee hosting countries** to strengthen policies, plans, and institutional arrangements to ensure provision of specific family-strengthening services and caregiving support for all parents, caregivers, and their children (across the life course), fully inclusive of refugee and host communities and families and addressing their specific needs.
- **Host a Global Parenting Forum in 2024** to amplify the unique needs of parents, caregivers, and families, including in forced displacement, and to catalyze national-level action in support of parents, caregivers, children, and adolescents facing crisis and adversity.
- **Contribute to the 2024 Ministerial Conference to End Violence Against Children** by collaborating with WHO, Member States, and other partners to promote family-strengthening and caregiver support interventions for children in refugee and host communities as an essential part of the solution.
- **Convene existing communities of practice** to ensure national and subnational stakeholders working to ensure an enabling environment in which parents, caregivers, and families can access the support they need.
- **Facilitate the exchange of information** and evidence across sectors and contexts on what works to support parents, caregivers, and families in crisis contexts through an online Knowledge Hub, cross-sectoral convenings, and communications campaigns.

## Coordination

Overall coordination for this joint pledge will be provided by GISP, which works with governments, UN agencies, civil society partners, researchers, and donors to promote universal access to parenting and caregiver support so that every child can receive the support they need during the first two decades of life and across the life course. GISP provides a platform for collaborative action across four pillars: innovation, scale, evidence generation and knowledge sharing, and advocacy. Pledge actions will be incorporated into interagency annual work plans and a multi-year results framework. Close coordination with the Family Strengthening Task Force and UNHCR will be guaranteed.

Additionally, GISP will contribute to multi-stakeholder pledges that commit to increasing support for parents, caregivers and families facing crisis and adversity, including 'Enhancing Refugee Self-Reliance and Wellbeing - quality, holistic and gender transformative Early Childhood Development' and the '*Multi-stakeholder Pledge: Fostering mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.*' The Alliance is also submitting a joint pledge with INEE on 'Supporting integrated approaches to Child Protection and Education in Refugee and Displacement Situations'. Both this pledge and the joint Alliance-INEE pledge will contribute to the '*Multi-stakeholder pledge: Child Rights.*' This pledge specifically aligns with multiple elements of the Multi-stakeholder Child Rights pledge, including the sections on 'Child Protection' and 'Access to Key Services'.

## Background information

The goals of GISP are to:

1. Protect and support children, adolescents, parents and caregivers, including families affected by crisis and displacement, to strengthen family wellbeing and functioning in the face of multiple, overlapping stressors;
2. Catalyze an enabling environment in which parents and caregivers have access to the resources and supports they need to nurture their children's development and wellbeing across the life course; and
3. Lay the foundation for mainstreaming the widespread uptake and implementation of evidence-based parent, caregiver, and family support approaches in all countries, including those affected by crisis.

The objectives of the Alliance's Family Strengthening Task Force of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (FSTF) are to:

1. Improve global stakeholder (humanitarian response practitioners, donors, researchers, policymakers) access to resources and evidence for family strengthening programming in humanitarian settings;
2. Enable access for multi-sectoral practitioners to programmatic guidance and learning platforms that incorporate evidence generated on family strengthening;
3. Improve inter-agency collaboration around interventions related to Family Strengthening in humanitarian settings.