

Co-designing an app for parents and guardians to promote early childhood development: A Namibia case study

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Background

Many children in low- and middle-income countries are disadvantaged in achieving development goals as they lack vital support from family and surroundings. As a tool to increase equity in this area, **mobile phone applications** can provide parents and caregivers with scientific information and childrearing activities to promote **children's development** for ages **0-5 years**.

Methods

Twenty Namibian parents and guardians and six in-country subject matter experts participated in **7 co-design workshops** to co-create the *Thrive by Five* app and content between March-May 2022. Detailed notes from the workshops and written feedback from experts were coded and analysed following established **thematic techniques**.

Objective

As a part of a larger project involving 30+ countries, this study aimed to describe the iterative **co-design** process and development of a childrearing app, "*Thrive by Five*", in **Namibia**.

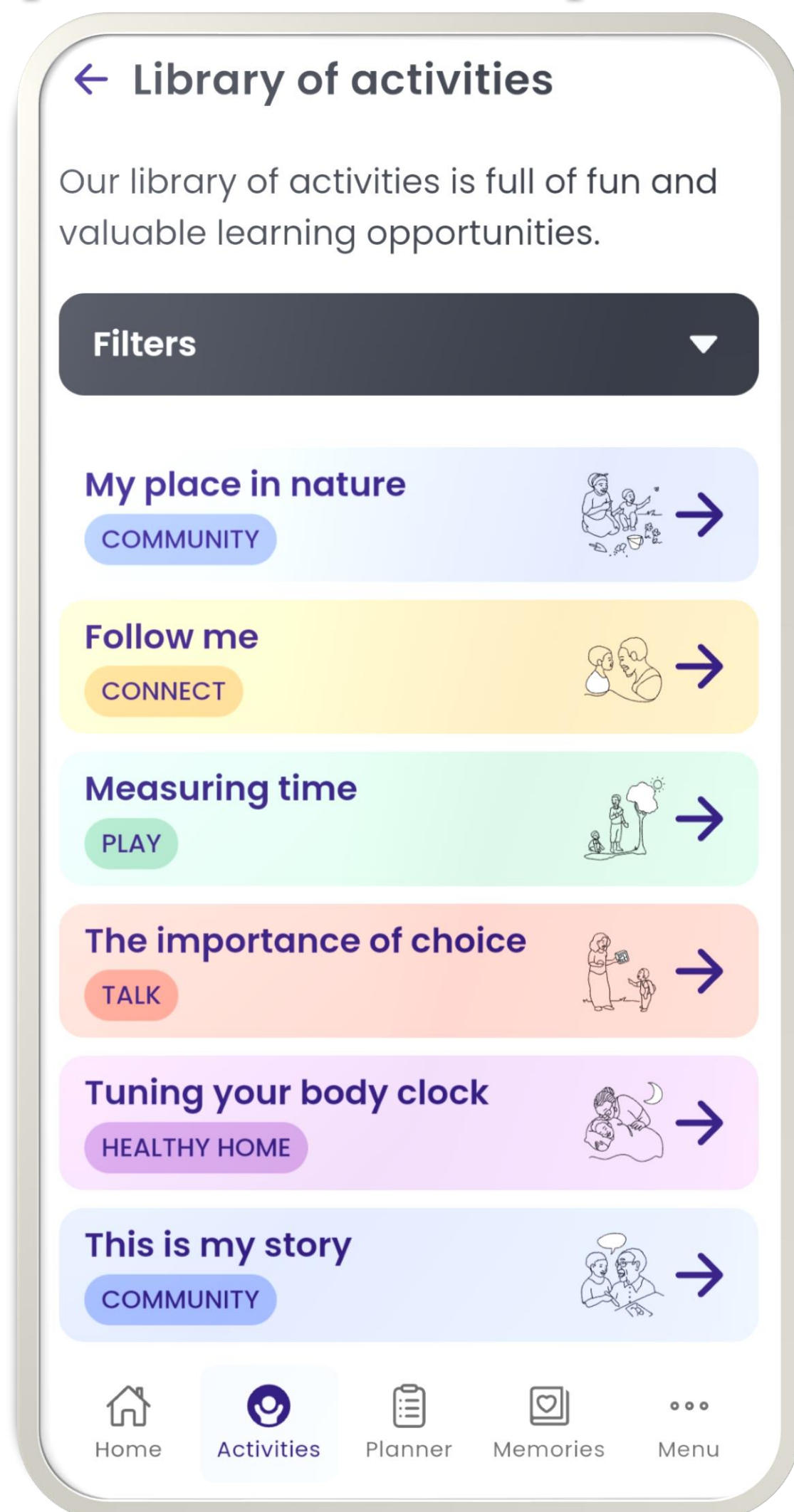


Fig 1. Collective Actions library in the *Thrive by Five* app, featuring five domains

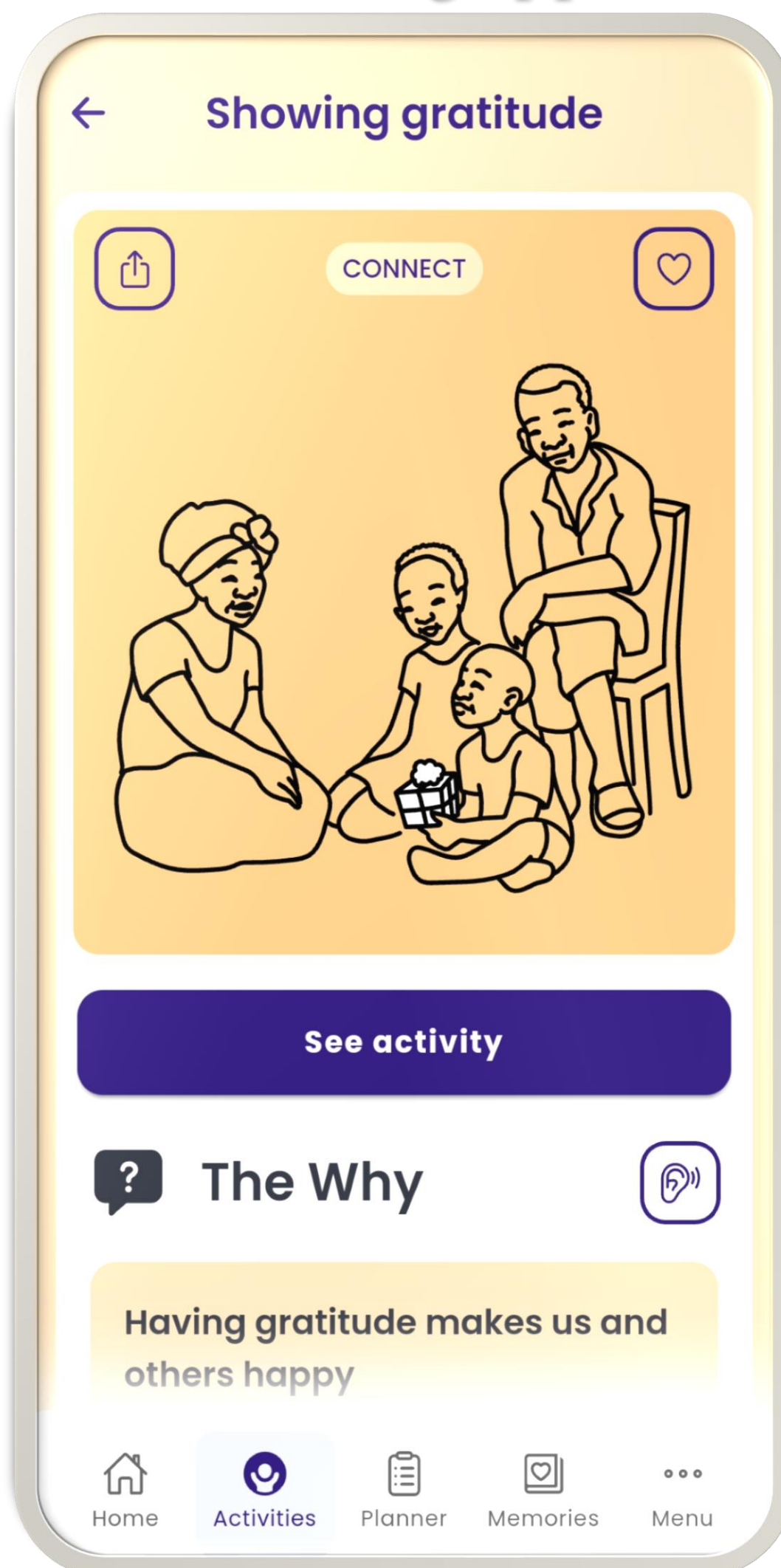


Fig 2. Example of a new Collective Action "Showing gratitude" in the domain "connect"

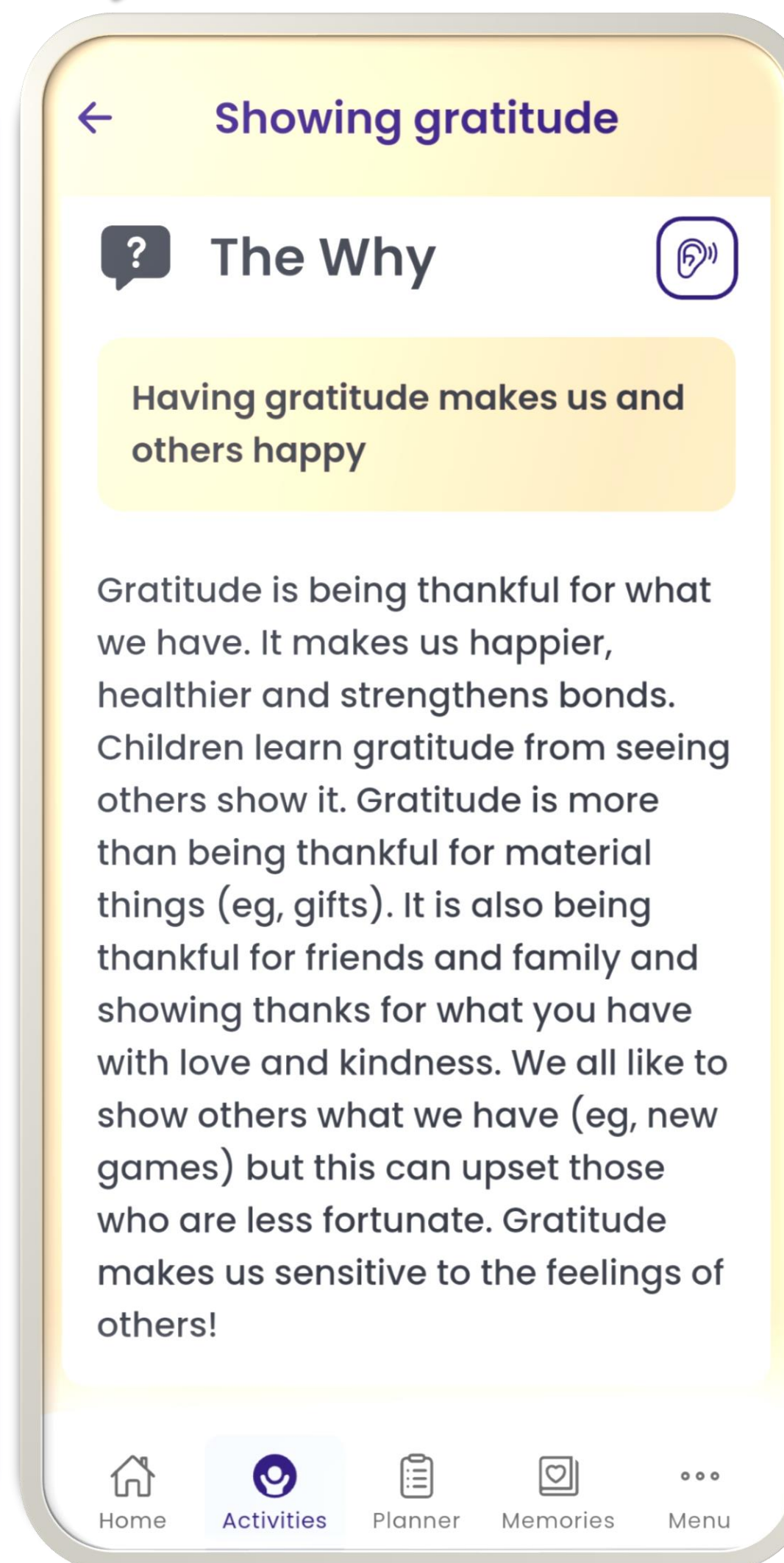


Fig 3. "The Why" explains the scientific reasons behind the Collective Action



Fig 4. Suggested childrearing activity for "Showing gratitude"

Results

Specific to Namibia, new Collective Actions were requested and developed to promote inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds including children with disability, educate children about thankfulness and help bereaved children to cope with their grief and loss. Also, **examples of specific cultural activities were removed to not to exclude any ethnic communities**. Further, the involvement of Government representatives in the co-design process ensured that the content aligned with relevant policies in Namibia.

Acknowledgement

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