

How Moroccan-Dutch parents learn in communities of practice: Evaluating a bottom-up parenting programme

Spark L. van Beurden PhD student  | Prof. Mariette de Haan  | Prof. Marian J. Jongmans

Department of Educational and Pedagogical Sciences, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Correspondence

Spark L. van Beurden, Department of Educational and Pedagogical Sciences, Utrecht University, Heidelberglaan 1, Utrecht 3584 CS, The Netherlands.

Email: s.l.vanbeurden@uu.nl

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Abstract

Research shows that top-down-designed parenting programmes do not always meet the needs of postmigration parents. Bottom-up programmes by migrant organizations hold a promise to fill this gap; however, research about these programmes and appropriate evaluation methodologies is scarce. Drawing upon Wenger's (2010) "communities of practice," this paper explores an alternative perspective on parenting programme evaluation. Findings are presented from a study looking into social learning processes of postmigration parents who participated in a bottom-up programme about raising teenagers in urban areas. Using an ethnographically inspired method combined with a preprogramme and postprogramme design, 115 Moroccan-Dutch mothers and fathers from 15 programme groups participated. Results show that the programme provided a social learning space in which parents used themselves as resources to learn collectively about parenting. Moreover, parents consciously engaged in learning interactions across learning spaces stretched into their social networks. These analyses showed how parents' development of "learning citizenship" (Wenger, 2009) provides us with insight in collective learning dimensions present in a bottom-up parenting programme, which is often not included in evaluation studies. Implications for practitioners as facilitators of parents' collective learning are presented.

KEYWORDS

bottom-up parenting programme, communities of practice, evaluation study, migration, social network

1 | INTRODUCTION

Migration can present great challenges for postmigration parents, as it can cause parenting practices to destabilize and change rapidly within families and over generations (Cook & Waite, 2016; De Haan, 2011; Renzaho, Mellor, & Green, 2011). Although institution-based parenting programmes¹ using top-down designs can be effective for some groups of parents, including ethnic minorities (Barlow, Smailagic, Huband, Roloff, & Bennett, 2012), programmes in western

immigration societies do not always meet the needs of postmigration families (Bose, 2014; Fabian, Rådestad, & Waldenström, 2006; Ortiz & Del Vecchio, 2013). Scholars discuss several explanations for this mismatch, ranging from language barriers (Fabian et al., 2006) and lack of cultural sensitivity (Bose, 2014; Forehand and Kotchick, 1996, as referred to in Ortiz & Del Vecchio, 2013) to accounts with more fundamental critique that point to interplaying power relations and its risk of disempowerment (Cottam & Espie, 2014; Gillies, 2005; Van den Berg, 2016).

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In light of these findings, a potential gap in research is to examine “bottom-up” parenting programmes initiated by migrant organizations. Hermans (2004) and Kleijnen (2009) described such initiatives in the Netherlands and Belgium, and Renzaho, Halliday, Mellor, and Green (2015) presented a similar programme for African immigrant families in Australia. Referring to work of Hecla (2006), Turner (2007) defines bottom-up approaches as “the encouragement of participatory decision-making at micro-level through involvement of local stakeholders” (p. 233). Based on this definition, we view bottom-up parenting programmes as programmes in which parents' perspectives, experiences, and participation are perceived as core principles for support and learning. Although participants report positive experiences with bottom-up parenting initiatives (Kleijnen, 2009), research about their effects and appropriate evaluation methodologies is scarce.

As shown by reviews of Barlow et al. (2012) and Ortiz and Del Vecchio (2013), assessment of parents' individual acquisition of particular predefined competencies is predominantly used as evaluation method within parenting programme studies. In contexts of rapid social change, however, the fit of *predefined* parenting competencies to parents' context and background may remain yet unknown. Moreover, with its focus on *individual* competency acquisition, collective learning is often not taken into account, though this is of heightened interest when studying bottom-up parenting initiatives because of its community base. Drawing upon Wenger's (1998, 2009, 2010) “communities of practice,” this paper explores an alternative perspective on parenting programme evaluation. This perspective is used to analyse collective learning processes and has so far been applied mostly to the learning of teachers (Cowan & Menchaca, 2014) and social workers in the workplace (Smith, 2016). In this paper, we apply it to the learning of Moroccan-Dutch mothers and fathers as they participate in an intercultural bottom-up parenting programme in the Netherlands.

2 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 | A “community of practice” as a social learning space

Wenger (1998) introduced the idea of a community of practice (CoP) to describe social learning spaces formed by people who engage in the same practice and share an interest to make sense of that practice. Drawing upon sociocultural learning theory (Cole, 1988; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978), Wenger and associates understand learning not as an institutionalized, curriculum-oriented activity detached from everyday social activity, but as inherently present in social interactions between people (Wenger, 1998). As people exchange knowledge, skills, and support concerning a certain practice, such as professional teacher development (e.g., Cowan & Menchaca, 2014) or social work (e.g., Smith, 2016), they continuously define and negotiate the meaning of that practice, to what frame of reference it belongs, and consequently who they are participating in that practice. As a result, members of a CoP share specific competences differentiating them from nonmembers, and they develop a meaningful (collective) identity (Wenger, 2010).

Postmigration contexts provide complex social learning spaces in which negotiations over meaning become intensified. Research about

migrant families in, for example, Britain (Cook & Waite, 2016) and the Netherlands (De Haan, 2011) shows how parents (re)construct their parenting practices as they navigate diverse parenting concepts present in their daily life. Taking a social learning approach on cultural transitions of postmigration families defines our understanding of parents as active “meaning making [entities]” (Wenger, 2010; p. 2). As such, we propose communities of practice as a useful perspective to *describe* social processes by which postmigration parents learn about parenting, because it aims to capture learning and development from the perspective of the learner (Lave & Wenger, 1991) rather than to *prescribe* how learning should happen.

2.2 | “Learning citizenship” as driving force for collective learning

A remarkable aspect of Wenger's (2009) theory is his explicit attention for collective learning. He introduced the term “learning citizenship”² to refer to this social dimension; it concerns the extent to which people are open and prone to learn from each other and the extent to which they feel responsible to manage their participation in learning partnerships in and across spaces. Such systemic perspectives on learning have been put forward in the past by others, for instance, in Engeström's (2000) activity theory and in Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory. In such approaches, collective learning processes are conceptualized in addition to individual learning experiences, as well as their interaction on multiple social levels. Such perspectives, and communities of practice in particular, provide a lens through which we can study people's orientation of themselves within learning groups. Therefore, the concept of learning citizenship as a collective learning dimension is important to consider when studying bottom-up programmes that intend to support people in using their own experiences and perspectives as leading forces for community learning.

An important notion about learning citizenship is that it cannot be imposed. However, as Wenger (2009) explains, as lived social practice, it is in direct communication with its context, and it can be nurtured. The quality of learning interactions in communities is seen as important resource, as well as the role of members who fully embody the concept of learning citizenship by using their own experiences to inspire others. Moreover, Wenger (1998) differentiates between potential, active, and latent CoPs to refer to stages before, during, and after the rise of CoPs, respectively, reflecting the fluent nature of CoPs. As he describes, CoPs arise when people identify with others practicing and learning in the same domain, whereas they recognize that individuals as well as the collective serve as learning resources for one another. Therefore, in our understanding, learning citizenship can be viewed as both an aspect of community formation as well as learning outcome of people's engagement in a CoP, relating to the durability of the learning community.

2.3 | Current study

In this paper, we present an empirical study looking into social learning processes of Moroccan-Dutch mothers and fathers participating in the intercultural bottom-up parenting programme Youth of Today! (YoT)³. Following our theoretical framework, we specifically aim to explore how these parents form CoPs with each other by questioning (a) if

and how they engage in social learning spaces concerned with the practice of parenting and (b) if and how they develop a sense of learning citizenship within these spaces. As we are interested in the function of the (semi)formal social support structure of the programme, we limit ourselves to the analysis of participants' individual and collective learning exchanges. As such, we neither intend to evaluate the content of their parenting practices nor potential reconstructions within the scope of this paper.

2.4 | Background: Intercultural bottom-up parenting programme Youth of Today!

Derived from a self-identified need within the local Moroccan-Dutch community to handle parenting issues, the YoT-programme was set up and implemented since 2010 by Attanmia Foundation. The YoT-programme aims to support Moroccan-Dutch mothers and fathers in raising their teenagers in multicultural urban areas. Offering a six-session training, its goals include creating awareness among parents about their parenting styles, expanding their parenting concepts and skills, improving family communication, strengthening their support networks, and helping parents to connect diverse parenting concepts in their multicultural environment. YoT-trainers share the same migration history as parents as well as urban parenting context. The Moroccan-Dutch community has its history in labour and family reunion migration and includes both Arabic and Amazigh people, of which the great majority practises Sunni Islam (Van Praag, 2006). In YoT-sessions, trainers simultaneously use the multiple languages spoken within the community. While applying techniques of collective reflection, dialogue, education, and communication skill training, YoT-trainers draw upon sociological, psychological, and Islamic perspectives as well as participants' own perspectives on child development, parenting styles, urban youth culture, and citizenship. YoT is offered to existing groups of men and women who already come together regularly for sociocultural events and classes at semipublic locations, such as neighbourhood centres, migrant organizations, and mosques. As YoT is integrated in their regular meetings, participants do not register individually beforehand nor are they clinically indicated for participation. Familiarity among ***-participants varies from being unfamiliar with one another to being neighbours, friends, or family members.

The study involved a ZonMw funded project (project no. 729111012; ZonMw, 2017) performed by Utrecht University in 2013–2017, aimed at evaluating YoT to further improve the programme and provide knowledge about bottom-up family support services. As researchers, we were not involved with the programme design and implementation, nor was the communities of practice perspective part of its set-up. More information about Attanmia Foundation and YoT can be found here (in Dutch): <http://www.ATTANMIA.nl/projecten/project-shabab-jeugd-van-nu/>.

3 | METHOD

3.1 | Procedure

In order to study the learning of YoT-participants, we used an ethnographic-inspired research method (Crozier, 2005; Silverman, 2006),

combined with a preprogramme and postprogramme design and nested sampling procedure. The first author built a long-term relationship with the local Moroccan-Dutch community through participatory observations at YoT-sessions, sociocultural events, and family homes for 1.5 years. Twelve mother groups (1–12) and three father groups (13–15) were recruited by Attanmia Foundation from April 2014 to June 2015. We invited parents for research participation through introductory meetings and leaflets informing them about the aim and procedure. Our independent role as differentiating from programme providers was made clear, and possible issues of distrust were reflected upon together with the groups. The latter was done because participants can be understood to be part of a disempowered group within Dutch society, due to their socio-economic status intersecting with current ethnic tensions (inter)nationally (Hermans, 2004; Van den Berg, 2016). Reflecting on issues of power, we are aware that differences in background characteristics of research team members as compared to participants inevitably entered the researcher-participant relationship (Crozier, 2003; Van den Berg, 2007). However, our effort to address power issues through introductory meetings and working with a heterogeneous research team, including interviewers from the Moroccan-Dutch community, reflects our aim to work culturally sensitive. Moreover, we build on previous work with the Moroccan-Dutch community (e.g., De Haan, 2011). An extensive method description can be found in the Supporting Information.

Before and after the programme, additional meetings were organized to conduct data collection. Ethical approval was given by the Faculty Ethics Review Board of Utrecht University. All participants gave written informed consent, and pseudonyms are used in this paper. Individual preprogramme and postprogramme structured interviews (SIs) and semi-structured in-depth social network interviews (SNIs) and ethnographic case studies of groups were conducted with three nested samples. For an overview of the research procedure, outlining samples and instruments according to moments of measurement, see Table 1. Interviews were held in Dutch, Moroccan-Arabic, or Tamazight by the first author, two interns, and five multilingual assistants. SIs and SNIs took approximately 30 and 60 min, respectively, and were documented on paper (100%) and by audio recording (63%), in accordance with participants' preferences. Participatory observations were documented by field notes. SIs were transcribed verbatim in Dutch, and qualitative analysis was performed with only those 81 participants who participated in both preprogramme and postprogramme SIs. In order to conduct in-depth analysis, we used a step-wise stratified but otherwise random sampling strategy (based on representativeness in terms of gender, YoT-programme group and educational level as compared to total Sample 1) until the results reached saturation. For the analysis of SNIs and ethnographic data, the total of transcribed audios and field notes was included.

3.2 | Participants

Sample 1 included 115 participants, of which 86 mothers and 29 fathers. Their average age was 45 years old (ranging from 30 to 65 years) and most had three or four children (ranging from one to eight children). Ninety-two percent of participants is Moroccan-born, and three quarters migrated to the Netherlands during adulthood.

TABLE 1 Overview of research procedure for each YoT-group

Week	(Nested) Sample	Event/Measurement	Instrument
1	1, 2, 3	Introductory meeting about YoT-programme and research project	—
2	1	Preprogramme data collection at group meeting	Structured interview
2	2 (if applicable)	Preprogramme data collection at individual meetings	Social network interview
3–8	3 (if applicable)	YoT-sessions and data collection	Participatory observations
8	1	Postprogramme data collection at group meeting	Structured interview
8–10	2 (if applicable)	Postprogramme data collection at individual meetings	Social network interview
8–10	3 (if applicable)	Postprogramme data collection at individual meetings	Parenting context visualization interview

Participants vary in their educational background, ranging from no education at all to primary education, vocational training, and higher education, with fathers being higher educated than mothers on average. Half of participants has previous experience with other parenting programmes, with more mothers (43%; $N = 81$) than fathers (8%; $N = 81$). Nested Sample 2 included 23 participants, spread over six YoT-groups (8, 10–12, and 14 and 15). In order to gather a substantial dataset of in-depth material about fathers' parenting experiences, equal numbers of mothers ($N = 13$) and fathers ($N = 10$) were strived for, while aiming for similar variation in other background characteristics as compared to Sample 1. Nested Sample 3 consisted of four mother groups (1, 2, 11, and 12) and one father group (14). Groups were purposively selected with location, gender, and practical possibilities as our selection criteria to represent the variety found in Sample 1. The higher prevalence of mother groups for the ethnographic case studies reflects the prominent recruitment of mothers by YoT.

3.3 | Instruments

In order to measure if and how participants engage in a social learning space concerned with parenting, we operationalize this in accordance with our theoretical framework as participants' engagement in peer-to-peer interactions involved with exchanges of experiences, reflections, knowledge, skills, advice, support, and problem sharing and solving with respect to a shared interest to learn about parenting. We operationalize learning citizenship as participants' orientation and management of themselves within a group of people sharing this learning interest. SIs were designed to collect participants' reflections on parenting experiences in terms of role, intentions, and behaviour and experiences with social support and exchange, and perceptions on YoT. The postprogramme SI repeats the preprogramme SI's questions and additionally asks about experienced changes. In addition, SNIs were designed to collect participants' reflections on parenting concepts and their urban parenting context, quantitative ego-network data, and reflections on experiences with social support and learning about parenting within their social network. In this paper, we only use qualitative interview data and leave out quantitative ego-network data, as network configurations are not relevant for this paper's aim. Furthermore, participants were asked to evaluate the programme enactment at postprogramme SNI, in terms of activities, theories, and materials used; role of trainers and other participants; and the value of YoT for parents overall. Ethnographic case studies included participatory observations at YoT-sessions, with peer-to-peer learning interactions between parents, programme enactment by trainers, and group dynamics revolving

around meaning making and identity as our main interests. Parenting context visualization interviews as part of the case studies are not included in this analysis, as they extend beyond the scope of this paper.

3.4 | Analyses

Data of all three samples were analysed separately through thematic coding with software programme NVivo by the first author and two assistants. The first step included segmenting and coding the data with regard to those texts that involved acts of and reflections on peer-to-peer exchanges and learning in relation to parenting, inside and outside the YoT-programme. Next, drawing upon our theoretical framework using discourse analysis (Gee, 2014; Silverman, 2006), we analysed how the segmented data reflects participants' orientation and management of themselves within these learning exchanges.

4 | RESULTS

From the analyses of interview and observational data, four themes emerged that reflect participants' engagement in a social learning space and their sense of learning citizenship. In the following, we differentiate between participants' (a) use of oneself and others as resources for collective learning *inside* the YoT-programme and (b) use of oneself and others as resources for collective learning *outside* the YoT-programme, and participants' (c) recognition of *individual* learning aspirations and (d) recognition of *collective* learning aspirations.

4.1 | Participants' use of themselves and others as learning resources inside the YoT-programme

From the analyses of both our observations of YoT-sessions and interview data, we found that participants engaged in peer-to-peer learning interactions revolving around specific parenting issues inside YoT-programme. These parenting issues included parents' fear of "street culture" and "bad" influences of children's friends; setting rules concerning children's online activities and contacts; transmission of religious faith and cultural traditions; worries about children's (potentially limited opportunities for) participation in society; and building trust with their children. From the analysis of observational notes, we found that trainers incited such reciprocal exchanges by introducing diverse parenting perspectives or practices to activate reflection and dialogue within the groups. This is illustrated by the following observational notes of Session 1 of YoT-group 1. During this session, the trainer invited parents to experiment with a home exercise: "active" listening

(inviting children to talk while parents refrain from opinions, advice, or rejections). Mothers responded by discussing their experiences and troubles with conversations with their children in the group:

[Mother] Maryam replies to the others by sharing how she approaches it: 'I know, my child arrives home at four o'clock. From four to six I do nothing. Make tea, have cookies, and then she will talk'. Other mothers react and a discussion is raised about finding time to spend with your child. [...] The trainer replies: 'Pick a time in your agenda, why not? I don't have a recipe for parenting, but you can just try for five minutes and see what works for you.

This excerpt shows how the trainer's invitation to experiment with communication skill exercises at home mobilized parents to share their own experiences and to advice each other. Moreover, in her instruction, the trainer activated parents to experiment and reflect for themselves on the fit of this parenting practice, acknowledging them as experts of their own parenting.

Other learning interactions incited by YoT-trainers as observed include collective reflections on migration and citizen experiences, mapping out individual and collective skill and knowledge gaps, sharing and discussing diverse parenting theories, providing emotional support among participants, and discussing and reflecting on learning experiences. At postprogramme, 69% of participants (N = 81) referred to other participants' personal stories as valuable resources for learning. As mother Adiba (39, four children; YoT-group 4) said when she was asked what she thinks of YoT: "What I liked about the training is that we were all gathered. Everybody spoke about their problems with their children. And we gave each other advice. What do you do and you?" This quotation shows that participants felt mandated to use their own experiences as "lay persons" as legitimate resources to find solutions for their experienced problems, as they engaged in collective reciprocal exchanges in the sessions.

Variation in participants' views on the use of themselves as learning resources was found, too. Doubts about the need and effectiveness of peer-to-peer-based learning were expressed by some participants (17%; N = 81), as illustrated by an observation of the final session of YoT-group 14. In this session, fathers evaluated the programme. Father Damane (50, four children) looked back on the programme's approach in which the trainer refrained from giving his opinion and said, "Sometimes you get the feeling: but how should it be done? There is no standard. You're like, well it can't be that everything is correct. There has to be something that works universally for everyone." Father Damane continues explaining that he had liked the trainer to share scientific knowledge in order to judge their stories, formulating feelings of insecurity about the way parenting knowledge is gathered in the programme. This excerpt shows how this father positions himself in relation to the learning model used in YoT and referred to more top-down learning models underlying his preference for knowledge acquisition and transfer. His discomfort with peer-to-peer learning can be interpreted as critique on the model used in YoT. However, it can also be interpreted as a disarray of learning expectations, caused by the confrontation with an unfamiliar model in which peers are positioned as experts and knowledge is approached in a more open-ended manner.

4.2 | Participants' use of themselves and others as learning resources outside the YoT-programme

From SNIs analysis, we found that participants (52%; N = 23) regularly engaged in spontaneous, self-initiated peer-to-peer learning interactions preprogramme, by exchanging parenting experiences and discussing knowledge with family members and friends. Postprogramme, more parents (79%; N = 19) reported to engage in learning interactions outside the sessions, and qualitative differences were found in reflections compared with preprogramme SNIs. Parents initiated learning exchanges and support more consciously, based on what they experienced in YoT- sessions. For instance, when asked at a postprogramme SNI whom she is in touch with about parenting, mother Soumia (39, three children; YoT-group 11) described an exchange with her siblings abroad: "Every day what I learn, I go home. I call [my sisters] via Viber [a social media application]. I say: This is good for ..., that is good. What you do is not good. (...) They try to join." This mother explained how she involved her siblings through digital media into the learning inside YoT, by sharing advice based on her own learning experiences at the sessions. This example shows how participants' learning interactions reached out beyond the programme's local social learning space, and even across national borders through digital spaces.

From postprogramme SNIs analysis, we found that mothers specifically felt supported by YoT to pass on knowledge to other mothers outside the sessions. As illustrated by the following quotation of a postprogramme SNI, mother Zainab (42, four children; YoT-group 10) feels responsible to include others in the collective learning process. While she learns within the sessions, this mother takes into account how her own learning can be extended to the learning of others, too:

So it is not just very important to us, but also (...) because then we can pass it on to mothers who didn't show up or mothers who are not allowed outside, so they receive it too. This specifically we see it a lot; that the programme we did, we pass it along to mothers we know (...).

This quotation shows how mother Zainab consciously manages her YoT-participation across social spaces, including those parents she believes can benefit but are unable to attend personally. As such, it shows how YoT offered parents a social learning space from which they can reach out to others.

4.3 | Participants' recognition of individual learning aspirations

In addition to participants' active engagement in peer-to-peer learning, we also found that they showed increased recognition of themselves as "learners." When asked to reflect upon changes within the time between preprogramme and postprogramme SNIs, parents mentioned that they came to aspire learning more, as they experienced how encountering new perspectives and practices supported them in their parenting. The following quote of father Amrou (48, three children; ***-group 14) illustrates this, as he was asked what he liked about YoT:

That you become aware. That you also become [...] curious about parenting. [...] As far as I'm concerned,

the subject is never closed. Then you are done. No, that question always remains open. Maybe questions have been answered; maybe they also have been answered wrong. Or maybe later yet other answers come. You never know, because parenting, [...] the question and answers can always change.

This quote shows how father Amrou became aware of his aspiration to remain open and “curious” to new knowledge, due to his participation in YoT. Also, his narrative reflects an understanding of knowledge as fluent in its fit to his learning aspirations as a parent, changing from moment to moment, which makes learning a continuous and never-ending process.

From the analysis of comparisons between preprogramme and postprogramme SIs, we found variation between mothers and fathers in the recognition of themselves as learners, related to differences in previous learning experiences. In interviews, fathers more often talked about their learning experiences in the programme as “new” to them, and how this discovery of learning collectively to support their parenting directed their future learning aspirations. Mothers, in comparison, more often talked about the knowledge shared in the programme as familiar to them. They expressed appreciation for the experience of being reminded and made aware of this knowledge again, as illustrated by the following quote. When asked postprogramme if the way she deals with parenting problems has changed since the preprogramme SI, mother Nasrin (43, three children; YoT-group 12) said, “Yes it has, because of the repetitions you try to [...] listen more to your child, talk more to your child. [...] Those repetitions, they wake you up.” The learning experience mother Nasrin spoke about seems to be of different quality than that of fathers, as her engagement in YoT supported her parenting by “reinforcing” previous learning experiences.

4.4 | Participants' recognition of collective learning aspirations

In addition to participants' increased recognition of individual learning aspirations, we found that participants also showed increased recognition of collective learning aspirations. Derived from the analyses of observations and postprogramme SIs, we found that participants expressed the need to learn together as parents and their commitment to do so. At several sessions, participants came up to us to share how much they learned from opening up conversations with other parents and how “much needed and joyful” that is, according to mother Saloua (41, four children; YoT-group 12). Saloua explained in an informal talk, “I'm really, really busy with four children and usually I wouldn't make time for it, but now I do because I learn so much from the other women.” The effort this mother says to make to prioritize her programme attendance shows her willingness and openness to learn from other laypersons about parenting.

Other participants reflected upon a discovered aspiration to learn as a community towards the end of the programme. At a final session, mother Ayada (46, four children; YoT-group 11) shared, “These sessions are so important to us, because we need it so much. Parenting is not easy you know. It is the most difficult thing there is.” Mother Ayada talked in a plural form about learning needs, positioning herself

in a group of people involved in a practice of which the experience of it being difficult justifies a collective learning need. The observed identification of collective learning aspirations by parents was also voiced by some participants in postprogramme SIs. When asked about recommendations for the programme, participants expressed their wish to continue learning with each other about parenting. Father Amrou (48, three children; YoT-group 14) argued for this need because “parenting never stops,” and father Fahim (38, two children; YoT-group 13) said, laughing, “Our problem is: we don't have knowledge. Knowledge is what they lack. That is our problem, the big problem. I'm happy these kinds of things [YoT-programme] happen. That they (...) become wiser.” Father Fahim pointed out a knowledge gap he identifies within his community of fellow migrant fathers, alternately using *we* and *they* to refer to that community. This shows that, although he identifies with that community, he also takes a meta-position to review and advocate for the needs of that community.

When asked at the sessions and SNIs about their expectations and intentions to continue learning collectively after the programme has ended, differences were observed between groups. Mother Zubaidah (45, three children; YoT-group 8) explained in an informal talk at a final session that, although YoT has made her aware of the need to learn together, she believes “deep conversations in which women really share everything” will not happen without the YoT-trainer leading it. This quotation shows how YoT generated Zubaidah's recognition of her group as learning resource for parenting and enabled her to act upon this within the sessions. However, it also indicates for the essential role of trainers to create a space in which parents feel the possibility to open up to learn from one another. Participants from other groups pointed to other conditions that may support their intention to continue learning as peer-to-peer collective, as we found from postprogramme SNIs analysis. Father Amrou (48, three children; YoT-group 14) said in such interview, “We are an association. Come together often as well and ... in itself, yes, it [learning about parenting] will come back. Yes, it will just continue.” This illustrates that the fact that Father Amrou's programme-group was embedded in a sociocultural association that provides regular meetings can serve as a potential condition to continue learning collectively.

5 | DISCUSSION

5.1 | The activation of communities of practice within an intercultural bottom-up parenting programme

In this paper, we adopted a social learning perspective to study how Moroccan-Dutch mothers and fathers learn among each other as they participate in an intercultural bottom-up parenting programme. Findings demonstrate how parents' individual learning is intertwined with their learning as a group. By offering structured sessions of peer-to-peer learning interactions to people who already gather regularly for sociocultural events, the programme formalizes existing groups as social learning spaces. With this specific recruitment method, it taps into what Wenger (1998) calls a *potential* in order to

activate a learning community. Furthermore, findings show how parents consciously manage their peer-to-peer learning interactions within and across social learning spaces stretching into their social networks. This indicates that, by addressing parents' as learning resources for one another, the programme invites parents to develop a sense of learning citizenship within this semiformal social support structure. As such, this study exemplifies how the programme "braids individual and collective learning" (Wenger, Trayner, & De Laat, 2011; p. 13), as parents form CoPs among each other that reach out beyond the social space of its sessions.

By offering multilingual programme enactment and inclusion of parenting theories from diverse perspectives, the intercultural character of the programme intercepts lingual and cultural barriers found earlier with parenting programmes (Bose, 2014; Fabian et al., 2006; Ortiz & Del Vecchio, 2013). Placing parents' own experiences and cultural knowledge among a multitude of perspectives increases its receptiveness to postmigration parents. Moreover, engaging in the programme addresses parents' sense of ownership over their own learning, as they discover that learning resources can be found in their everyday social relations. This reflects a horizontal approach to knowledge building and learning, by which expertise is acknowledged to lie within parents and in interactions between them. Specifically, mobilizing parents' own expertise to learn about parenting disarrays more traditional roles of trainers as "providing knowledge" and parents as being "in lack of knowledge." As such, this approach connects to initiatives using critical pedagogic principles to support people's learning and community engagement by putting local knowledge upfront, such as described by, for example, Freire (1968) and Stetsenko (2009).

Variation found between mothers and fathers and between programme groups interestingly point to different entry conditions. Findings indicate fathers' relatively new experience with collective and formalized learning about parenting. In concordance with their lower report of parenting service use prior to their programme-participation, this may be explained by social services' predominant targeting of mothers (Gillies, 2005). Being approached as main caretaker, and often as migrant mother that "lags behind" (Van den Berg, 2016) specifically, mothers may be better familiarized with parenting services prior to their programme participation. Findings indicating group differences point to entry conditions related to the potential of learning communities to continue postprogramme. Parents value trainers' moderator role to guide collective learning exchanges: however, strong preprogramme relationships among parents and continuation of groups' sociocultural events postprogramme underline parents' intentions to continue learning independently and collectively about parenting.

6 | CONCLUSION

6.1 | Evaluating collective learning in parenting programmes

By taking a social learning approach to evaluate an intercultural bottom-up parenting programme, we were able to map out collective

learning dimensions at play, which is so far little studied within this field. The study contributes to our knowledge by showing how parenting initiatives of migrant organizations connect to and formalize social learning processes among parents that are (potentially) present in informal daily social structures already. Because not only bottom-up parenting programmes make use of peer-to-peer learning interactions (see reviews by Barlow et al., 2012; Ortiz & Del Vecchio, 2013), the communities of practice perspective can be interesting to evaluate programme processes and outcomes of institution-based programmes as well. However, an approach centralizing collective learning and people's ownership in learning becomes particularly important in contexts of cultural transition, diversity, and social change. As found, parents often experienced parenting as difficult and pointed to "knowledge gaps" in their community. As indicated by the topics discussed among parents in the programme, questions about children's developmental transition in puberty; societies' digitalization; cultural transmission (Cook & Waite, 2016; De Haan, 2011; Renzaho et al., 2011); and issues of discrimination and exclusion intersecting with low socio-economic status (Hermans, 2004) add up to this. Handling these challenges may become strained postmigration due to eroded social networks and an often experienced shift from collective to individual parenting culture postmigration (De Haan, 2011; Renzaho et al., 2011). Concerning these factors in face of mismatches with social services, having insight into how bottom-up initiatives by migrant organizations offer parents renewed, exploratory social support structures that connect to and value their own, collective knowledge building is of extra importance.

6.2 | Implications for practice: Practitioners as facilitators of collective learning among postmigration parents

Conceptualizing social learning processes happening among postmigration parents in bottom-up programmes does not only offer us a broadened understanding of these processes but also give us specified terms that can be used by practitioners and scholars alike to facilitate community building and evaluate processes of change. This study illustrates how this approach shifts our view on parents as being "in need of certain skills and knowledge" to being "learning resources for one another". This is of extra importance in settings in which issues of diversity, inclusion, and social justice are of great concern for professional development in social work fields (Bose, 2014). Viewing parents as potential learning communities invites practitioners to adopt a facilitating role to support parents to take on a socially attuned learning approach to parenting and develop a sense of learning citizenship. Although this may be of extra importance when working with marginalized communities, bottom-up designs can be interesting for all parents, as critiques on top-down-based parenting support are not limited to their mismatch with postmigration parents only (Cottam & Espie, 2014; Gillies, 2005). Furthermore, recognizing the specific contribution of bottom-up parenting initiatives can help policy makers better attune their cooperation with these organizations. Policy makers can support these (semi)formal social support

structures, for example, by providing sustainable financial means. In doing so, they assist parenting support services that do not only fit the needs of postmigration parents but also contribute to community building.

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CONTRIBUTION

SLvB co-designed and executed the fieldwork and data analysis, and wrote the paper. MdH designed the study, co-designed the design and collaborated with the fieldwork, analysis, and the writing and editing of the final manuscript. MJJ collaborated with the writing and editing of the final manuscript.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ We follow Barlow et al. (2012) in their definition of parenting programmes as “interventions that utilize a structured format, work with parents in groups, and that are aimed at improving parenting practices and family functioning.” Different designs can be distinguished, such as behavioural, cognitive-behavioural, relationship-based, and multimodel (see also Cottam & Espie, 2014; Golding, 2000).
- ² Learning citizenship should not be confused with “citizenship learning,” a term used by Biesta, Lawy, and Kelly (2009) to describe how people “learn democratic citizenship through their participation in a range of different formal and informal practices and communities” (p. 8).
- ³ Original name of the programme is Shabab van Nu!, a mix of Arabic and Dutch meaning Youth of Today!.

ORCID

Spark L. van Beurden  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8717-5959>

Prof. Mariette de Haan  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0412-7442>

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

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