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Lilian G.P. Boerkamp – PhD candidate, University of Twente, Communication Science.

Alexander J.A.M. van Deursen - Full professor, University of Twente, Communication Science.

Ester van Laar – Assistant professor, University of Twente, Communication Science.

Alex van der Zeeuw – Assistant professor, University of Twente, Communication Science.

Shenja van der Graaf – Associate professor, University of Twente, Communication Science.

Correspondence to: Lilian Boerkamp
E-mail: l.g.p.boerkamp@utwente.nl
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EVALUATING A DIGITAL INCLUSION INTERVENTION FOR PARENTS IN POVERTY: RESULTS FROM QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

DE EVALUATIE VAN EEN DIGITALE INCLUSIE INTERVENTIE VOOR OUDERS IN ARMOEDE: RESULTATEN VAN KWALITATIEF ONDERZOEK

LILIAN G.P. BOERKAMP, ALEXANDER J.A.M. VAN DEURSEN, ESTER VAN LAAR, ALEX VAN DER ZEEUW, SHENJA VAN DER GRAAF

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the evaluation results of a digital inclusion intervention for Dutch parents in poverty. This intervention aimed to promote digital inclusion and positive outcomes in parents' daily lives by focusing on the four phases of internet appropriation: *attitude and motivation*, *material access*, *skills*, and *usage*. The 'Samen wegwijs op het internet' (SWOI) intervention took place from November 6, 2024, to January 29, 2025, in the southern region of Enschede, the

Netherlands. During the program, 14 parents received a laptop, weekly training courses, and free and accessible support in internet and computer use. A qualitative approach is used to evaluate the feasibility elements of the program. Lessons were learned from observations, in-between feedback moments, and short interviews. The results hint toward increased self-confidence in using the internet, pride in one's learning, and enhanced social contact. The lessons learned for future digital inclusion interventions are shared, including a call for integral intervention approaches and for appointing an intervention coordinator. The results will interest those working on digital inclusion, poverty relief, or intervention design.

KEYWORDS

poverty, internet appropriation, digital inclusion, parents, intervention evaluation, qualitative research

SAMENVATTING

Dit artikel presenteert de resultaten van de evaluatie van de digitale inclusie interventie, ontworpen in co-creatie met Enschedese ouders in armoede. De interventie richt zich op het bevorderen van digitale inclusie en de bijbehorende positieve uitkomsten in het dagelijks leven van ouders, door ondersteuning te bieden in de vier fasen van internetgebruik: houding en motivatie, materiële toegang, vaardigheden en gebruik. Een pilot van het drie maanden durende programma genaamd 'Samen wegwijs op het internet' (SWOI) liep van 6 november 2024 tot 29 januari 2025 in Enschede Zuid. Tijdens het programma ontvingen 14 ouders een laptop, wekelijkse trainingen, en gratis en laagdrempelige ondersteuning in internet- en computergebruik. De haalbaarheid van het programma is geëvalueerd aan de hand van een kwalitatieve aanpak, bestaande uit observaties, tussentijdse feedbackmomenten, en korte interviews. De resultaten geven indicaties van meer zelfvertrouwen in het gebruik van internet, een gevoel van trots op wat men heeft geleerd, en verbeterde sociale contacten. Geleerde lessen worden gedeeld, van het belang van het ontwikkelen van een integrale interventie tot het aanstellen van een programmacoördinator. De resultaten zijn van waarde voor mensen die werken aan digitale inclusie, armoedebestrijding of het ontwerpen van interventies.

TREFWOORDEN

armoede, internetgebruik, digitale inclusie, ouders, interventie evaluatie, kwalitatief onderzoek

INTRODUCTION

Beneficial internet use can enhance one's societal position (Boerkamp et al., 2024a; Van Deursen et al., 2021; Van Dijk, 2017). Hence, digital inclusion support is crucial. While diverse existing initiatives aim to assist those in need of internet support, these initiatives are often fragmented (Alliantie Digitaal Samenleven, 2024; Van Deursen, 2023). Consequently, people who need assistance do not always find the right help that suits their needs. This can be especially challenging for at-risk groups concerning the internet, including households facing financial hardship (Ragnedda et al., 2022). Poverty increases the risk of being digitally excluded (Anrijs et al., 2023), which in turn exacerbates societal divides (Lutz, 2019; Van Dijk, 2020). Paradoxically, the greatest internet barriers are often faced by those who rely most on online (government) services (Dugdale et al., 2005). Furthermore, digital inclusion interventions do not always enhance all phases of internet appropriation, being *attitude and motivation, material access, skills*, and *usage* (Van Dijk, 2005). Nevertheless, an effective digital inclusion intervention should address barriers in all these categories (Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2015). For this reason, the digital inclusion program 'Samen wegwijs op het internet' (SWOI) was designed after a qualitative research process.

Following the above reasoning, households in poverty are central to this research. Given the indicated relevance of tailoring support to local needs (McKenzie et al., 2001), further specification was made to the target audience. SWOI was designed for and with parents in poverty, residing in Enschede, the Netherlands. Parents were deliberately chosen as a large share of those living in poverty are children and their respective parents (CPB, as quoted in Rösken 2023). Research focusing on parents and digital upbringing highlights that parents' digital literacy may increasingly influence their children's online behaviour and safety (Banić & Orehovački, 2024). By focusing on parents in poverty, we aim not only to strengthen their own digital confidence, agency, and social participation, but also to create positive ripple effects that can benefit their children in the long term. This follows the reasoning of the generational transmission of poverty (Vijlbrief & Te Mourik 2020; Visser 2019).

SWOI consists of diverse training courses, based on group learning. This enables one participant to learn from one another (Jones, 2007), and it may reduce shame in asking for help. This stigma is often present among individuals living in poverty (Meij et al., 2020). Learning in a group of likeminded people may reduce hesitation in asking for assistance. It may also enhance participants' social circle for asking for internet support, which is unfortunately often lacking for this audience (Goedhart et al., 2019; Helsper & Van Deursen, 2017). Besides providing knowledge and skills,

learning may have social and personal benefits for the participating parents (Schuller et al., 2002). Furthermore, the diversity of shorter training courses is expected to have a positive influence. Training courses may spark participants' curiosity for using technology and, as a result, minimize fears of using it (Holgersson et al., 2019); fear that is unfortunately present for the audience at hand (Boerkamp et al., 2025).

While the program was structured based on careful research (Boerkamp et al., 2024a, 2024b, 2025; in press), evaluation is a crucial part of intervention design (Van Deursen, 2023). Insight into what does and does not work is highly valuable. This research aims to gather insights into how the intervention works. Participants' insights are central to this evaluation, involving diverse qualitative methods, such as observations, in-between feedback moments, and short interviews. The evaluation activities aim to assess the feasibility qualities of the program. Six elements from prior research by Vellinga-Dings et al. (2024) are applied: intervention complexity, facilitation strategies, recruitment and selection success, quality of delivery, participant responsiveness, and intervention acceptability and suitability. This research aims to answer the following question: *'What are parents' experiences with the SWOI digital inclusion program, in terms of feasibility elements?'* To answer this question, this paper provides more information about the content of the SWOI intervention, further describes its methods and results, and presents a discussion to conclude.

THE INTERVENTION: SAMEN WEGWIJS OP HET INTERNET

The intervention program SWOI was designed after qualitative cocreation research with the participation of professionals and parents in poverty (Boerkamp et al., 2024b, 2025, in press). SWOI was a three-month digital inclusion program with weekly courses in the local neighborhood center, supported by (local) partners. An integral intervention was designed, meaning that all the phases of internet appropriation were incorporated, including *attitude and motivation*, *material access, skills*, and *usage* (Van Dijk, 2005). Following Van Dijk's (2005) internet appropriation theory, the integral intervention approach is expected to have positive outcomes in the parents' interconnected life domains, including *economic*, *social*, *cultural*, and *personal* (Figure 1).

To support *attitude and motivation*, group learning was applied, and the topics covered matched parents' needs. The subjects were (1) supporting children online, (2) digital safety, (3) Word and Excel, (4) digital government services, (5) digital health care, (6) mobile banking, (7) search

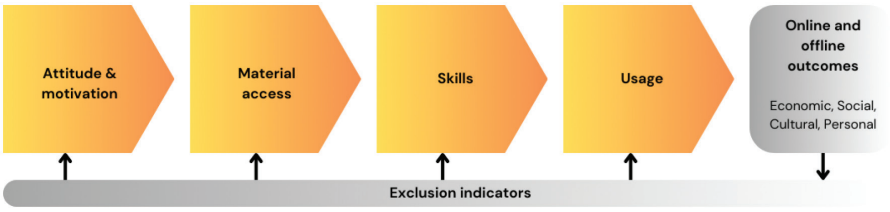

Figure 1: Internet appropriation process (based on Van Dijk, 2005).

engines, and (8) an excursion to become acquainted with new technologies in the central city library. Topics concerning their children were found to be a major motivation for parents to participate (Boerkamp, Van Deursen, Van Laar, Van der Zeeuw, Van der Graaf, & Lutkenhaus, in press). While this may hold true for parents in a broader sense, the courses addressing more administrative topics were tailored toward the context of poverty, therewith matching barriers found to be experienced by parents in poverty (Boerkamp et al., 2025). To provide a specific example, during the training on digital government services, the topics addressed related to applying for allowances. We aimed to enhance the parents' self-confidence and reduce their fears of being online, for example, by having them share experiences and educating them about digital safety. To increase motivation, the parents received a certificate after completing the program in a festive ceremony. To support *material access*, parents received a laptop, gifted by the municipality of Enschede. They could also receive technical assistance from Stichting Surplus and internet help via the online helpdesk DigiHulplijn. This, together with the lessons learned in the training courses, aimed to support the parents' *skills*. All sessions were based on existing support offerings. After each training, the parents received relevant (printed) materials that they could use to learn from home. For additional motivation, the parents were continuously referred to sources where they could learn more, thereby linking them to existing support. In the final ceremony, the parents were educated on how they could continue learning after the program ended. The diverse course offerings, combined with providing the parents home computer access, were intended to broaden and increase the frequency of their internet *usage*.

The principal researcher of this study served as the intervention coordinator. She was the central point of contact when parents had questions about the intervention. Program materials were developed, including a printed program folder, a folder with the library's course offerings, a form with the contact details of partners, and notebooks and pens. These materials were provided

during an introductory meeting in which all the practicalities were handled. A group chat was established, through which the intervention coordinator could send messages. The intervention coordinator was also present every week. A representative of the library was present at every training session. Different trainers led the courses, depending on the topic at hand and the respective organization involved.

This study assesses the feasibility of SWOI using the feasibility elements used by Vellinga-Dings et al. (2024). The first element is intervention complexity, which tests whether the intervention was well structured and 'simple but specific' (p. 29). The second category includes facilitation strategies, which measure what resources are needed for intervention execution. The third is recruitment and selection success, pertaining to whether participants were recruited and selected well. The fourth is the quality of delivery, which focuses on whether the modes of delivery were appropriate and how the teachers delivered the intervention. The fifth is participant responsiveness, which measures participant engagement in the program content and activities. Finally, intervention acceptability and suitability are assessed to determine whether the participants were satisfied with the intervention and considered it appropriate. Parents' experiences in terms of what the intervention has brought them are included in this latter element. While measuring the long-term effects of the program is not feasible in the given timeframe, SWOI aims to achieve that parents are more confident when using the internet, experience less fears in doing so, and are able to ask for help more easily. Specifying the latter, SWOI aims to enhance parents' knowledge concerning where to ask for help, so that parents know where to turn even after the study has ended.

METHOD

Data collection

Multiple methods, including observations, interviews, and group discussions, were implemented (Table 1). The parents knew beforehand that the program was being evaluated and that their feedback would be valuable in enhancing the program. Data were collected at the start of the intervention (November 6, 2024), midway after four sessions (December 4, 2024), and at the end of the program (January 30/31, February 11/12, 2025). Furthermore, observations and informal conversations formed part of the data. The parents filled out a short paper form with four questions at the first meeting. These questions addressed their current self-confidence when

Table 1: Data collection methods and measures.

Methods	Measures
Intake forms (questionnaires)	Demographic data; self-reported questions relating to intervention goals, concerning confidence, fear, and support networks; learning goals
Midpoint group evaluation (semistructured) and final interviews (semistructured) Informal conversations (notes)	Parents' feedback and reflections, mainly concerning intervention complexity, quality of delivery, intervention acceptability and suitability Parents' feedback and reflections, mainly concerning intervention complexity, facilitation strategies, quality of delivery, intervention acceptability and suitability
Observations (notes)	Researcher observations, mainly concerning facilitation strategies, recruitment and selection success, quality of delivery, and participant responsiveness

using the internet, their level of fear, whether they knew where to ask for help, and what they hoped to learn in the program. These questions served as input for the final interviews, enabling us to ask the parents whether they have seen improvements in this regard. Furthermore, questions were asked concerning improvements in the four phases of internet appropriation, and feedback was again requested on the program structure. The midpoint evaluation fostered an open group conversation and explored how the parents had experienced the program thus far. The parents first wrote down 'tips & tops' on Post-its individually, subsequently discussed in plenary.

The final interviews were held at the local library, except for one online interview with a parent who was staying at a rehabilitation center at the time. The interviews took approximately 16 minutes on average (min 8, max 32). During the observations and informal conversations, the principal researcher took field notes and wrote short summaries of her experiences and observations after each session. These notes mainly addressed participant responsiveness and the quality of delivery.

Participants

Fifteen participants were recruited in September and October 2024, based on a first-come first-served approach. Parents could participate if they indicated living in neighbourhoods south of Enschede, struggling to make ends meet, having children living at home, having sufficient command of the Dutch language, and having basic internet skills but also questions or wanting to learn more about the internet. The participants were recruited via direct contact with the researcher, social work initiatives, flyers in libraries and community centers, and messages via primary schools. As one parent did not attend the first session, we continued the program with 14 parents (see Table 2). The parents' ages ranged from 32-51 (mean=42), and their children living at home were aged 1-21 years (mean=9). Of the 14 participants, 6 participated in one or more prior research activities within this project.

We experienced no dropouts during the program. However, one parent unfortunately could not attend the last two sessions after having been in a traffic accident and going to a rehabilitation center. One other parent could not schedule her final interview because she had surgery shortly after the final session.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the parents (n=14).

Father/mother	n	Single/couple	n	Nr. of children	n	Origin	n
Father	1	Single	4	1	3	Dutch	4
Mother	13	Couple	10	2	6	Iraqi/Kurdish	3
				3	2	Syrian	2
				4	3	Palestinian	1
						Moroccan	1
						Iranian	1
						Ukrainian	1
						Pakistani	1

Data analysis

Whereas the intake forms mainly served as prompts for the final interviews, the results of the midpoint group evaluation were analyzed shortly after the evaluation meeting. The principal researcher

analyzed the recordings, and while listening, documented all the tips and tops mentioned by the parents. Concerning the final interviews, the principal researcher again analysed all the recordings by listening and assigning relevant quotes to the studied categories. These categories are related to the six feasibility measures of Vellinga-Dings et al. (2024). The notes from both the informal conversations and the observations were read, and insights were also assigned to the relevant categories.

RESULTS

This section presents insights from the combined data collection methods concerning intervention feasibility. Participant quotes from the final interviews and fictitious names are used to support the findings.

Intervention feasibility

Intervention complexity

The parents valued clear communication before and throughout the program, as well as the program structure. The intervention steps were clearly communicated, and useful updates were sent in the WhatsApp group chat. Furthermore, the parents valued receiving the printed lesson materials, as this helped them learn further in the comfort of their own homes. The evaluation results underline the importance of having a central intervention coordinator, who the parents found to be very approachable and open. Similarly, adapting communication styles is important in a group with parents from different backgrounds and language levels. This was highlighted by a participating father, Ali:

> *You guys are completely open, smiling, you listen well. And you also keep in mind that the parents are not all from university. That they are all ordinary people, many from immigrant backgrounds, so there you also have a language problem. I feel like you have also adapted well with other people. The words you use are understandable.*

As a point of feedback concerning intervention complexity, the parents had diverse points of departure concerning digital skills and knowledge. A few parents may have benefited from some additional basic skills training. One suggestion is to include a preliminary check in participant recruitment to ensure good participant-intervention fit.

Facilitation strategies

The parents were grateful for the gifted laptops. While diverse parents noted that the lesson content was more important than the devices, it became clear that the laptops had a positive influence. The laptops enabled the parents to apply what they learned in the sessions without needing to rely on suboptimal devices or devices of family members. Melinda, a participating mother, stated:

> *[The laptop is] great, wonderful. Yes, otherwise I have to borrow my child's Chromebook every day. Or I have to use the tablet. But a tablet is different. I had bought one just for my education, but I stopped that now. But it doesn't work well… […] But I found getting the laptop was really nice.*

Thus, a partner delivering devices is valuable. Additionally, technical support must be offered. While most of the laptops functioned well, some of the parents experienced technical difficulties. One parent suggested that it would have been useful if the partners offering the laptops and technical support had been introduced in the first session rather than the last. This might have lowered the barrier for the parents to reach out to them.

Recruitment and selection success

Diverse channels were used to recruit participants. Many parents were interested in participating, resulting in a waitlist. Overall, while the parents had diverse backgrounds, there could have been a greater mix of fathers and mothers. Furthermore, while a proper understanding of the Dutch language was a prerequisite for participation, some of the parents struggled more with the language than others did. For future programs, it may be advisable to check participants' language levels before starting the intervention.

Quality of delivery

The parents were positive about the quality of course delivery. They liked the diverse teachers and especially valued those who provided many practical examples. Experts from practice hence received great enthusiasm, with an example being the training offered by the local police (Figure 2). One of the other courses offered fewer practical examples, which some parents found disappointing. The parents particularly valued trainers who knew how to maintain order in the

Figure 2: Session on digital safety, provided by the local police.

classroom. In the midpoint evaluation, one parent mentioned struggling with teachers who spoke too fast and wished for more time for questions. This point of feedback was considered throughout the remaining sessions.

Participant responsiveness

The observations indicated strong parental involvement throughout the program. They were enthusiastic, asked questions, provided feedback, and shared experiences. The parents also valued the component of group learning, as expressed by mother Melinda:

> *It was nice [to learn in a group]. I don't like to learn alone. When I'm alone, like extra classes with someone or studying online, I don't like that at all.*

The downside of this enthusiasm was that some trainers occasionally struggled to maintain order throughout the training sessions. Some parents often discussed their experiences and asked many questions. The parents who were less talkative or struggled to express themselves in the Dutch language could feel overwhelmed by this. During the midpoint evaluation, this was first discussed in plenary, which enhanced understanding among the parents. Notably, the more experienced trainers seemed to be better able to maintain order in class.

Intervention acceptability and suitability

Parents mentioned that the lessons matched their learning needs and that they saw many benefits to the program. Even concerning the topics that parents thought they already knew much about, they indicated that they had learned new things. While some parents favoured certain topics more or less than others did, the overall program was received with enthusiasm. The parents indicated that they would recommend it to others and that they had already spoken positively about the program to those in their direct environment. Some parents stated that they would have liked to learn more about certain topics in the program. For example, while only one Wednesday morning was devoted to Word and Excel, parents indicated that they would have liked to spend more time learning about these programs. No burdens were expressed concerning the intervention. One difficulty some parents experienced throughout the intervention was finding care for their children while they were at the sessions. No daycare was provided in the current program, and the parents could only bring their children on the excursion to the central library. To accommodate parents who may struggle to find childcare, future interventions might, if possible, facilitate such care.

Furthermore, reflecting on the intake forms in the final interviews, two important elements concerning intervention acceptability were identified: (1) social bonding and (2) self-confidence. These will be discussed in more detail in the following two subsections.

Social bonding

The social nature of the intervention was shown to have positive effects on parents. Diverse parents indicated that they looked forward to the training sessions and saw them as a good use of their time. Multiple parents mentioned that, without the intervention, they would sit at home and not interact socially with others. Mother Lisa stated:

> *I don't work, my daughter goes to school from 8:30 to 2. After that, I have a lot of time. So I really liked this program, with all its elements. I would have wanted it to be even longer! It went very quickly. I liked it very much.*

During the intervention, it was valuable to observe all the experiences and tips parents shared. This sharing of knowledge was not limited to the intervention sessions but was also taken home to the participants' personal environments. For example, one mother helped her daughter with a job application using the knowledge she gathered in the Word and Excel training. Another mother sat together with her husband to provide a financial overview in Excel and shared what she had learned with an acquaintance. Another mother felt that she could communicate better with her daughter concerning issues of online safety because of what she had learned in the intervention. Two other mothers took the initiative to connect the local police to their children's primary school, aiming to disseminate the knowledge there too.

Fortunately, the social character of the program did not end with the intervention. Many of the parents agreed to stay in touch, and by parents' initiative, a follow-up meeting at the library was already scheduled a month after the intervention ended. The parents also shared social initiatives unrelated to digital inclusion. They mostly entered and left the training sessions with smiles on their faces and expressed that they were going to miss the weekly meetings when the intervention ended.

Self-confidence

All parents indicated that their self-confidence concerning the internet had increased because of SWOI. Firstly, diverse parents indicated that they now dare to do more without help from others. In addition, diverse parents indicated that they had learned from one another and that the program had helped them feel less shame in asking questions. Mother Fay, who, on the intake form, gave herself a score of 5 on a scale of 1 to 10 concerning her self-confidence on the internet, expressed this in the following manner:

> *Yes, [I] definitely [gained more self-confidence]! And then, of course, we received tips from the police during that one training, from other people, but also from fellow students who had tips like, gosh, look at that, at that program. So then you do feel a little more confident because of that. And now I've also dared to talk to other parents and say, how do you do that with [protecting] your children? So you also become more open. […] And before that I didn't really have that. […] I would score myself a 7 now!*

An interesting finding was that, while the parents felt more confident in performing tasks online by themselves, they also learned that it is okay to ask for help if needed. Similarly, they indicated that they now know better where to find help and felt positive about asking for this help if they would need it. During the program, one of the parents enrolled herself in a follow-up course on digital government. Another mother, Lisa, stated:

> *We learned that the library is not just for borrowing and returning books. A lot of other things happen there too. So this is kind of convenient. It's very close, so if I want to learn something or ask something, I can just quickly come here. If I find something difficult or want to learn more, I can quickly come here, and I can get help.*

With respect to self-confidence in how to ask for help, mother Macy noted:

> *We were given a lot of leaflets and things during the course where you can look at where to go. So, I do feel very confident in that. For example, when I want to take additional online courses, you name it. So I do feel very confident that I have enough in my folder to, if I go and check that, get further with that again.*

While overall, the parents indicated feeling more confident, many still found some tasks on the internet slightly scary. For example, parents indicated that while developments and possibilities on the internet continued to increase, this made them wary of online fraud. Furthermore, completing tax forms was still considered a major step. Parents did indicate that a training course may be insufficient and that either more training or lasting changes in the institutions creating these forms may be necessary.

Finally, the parents felt great pride in participating in (and in helping shape) the intervention. During the seventh session, mother Stacey proudly shared, "*I feel like I come home a little smarter every week!*" Throughout the program, diverse parents proudly shared achievements made because of the training sessions. This pride in learning was also apparent during the certificate ceremony. The parents seemed happy to show off their certificates and took the initiative to ask for a group picture as a memento (Figure 3). The observations revealed social cohesion and the parents' motivation. The parents also indicated that the certificate was a sign of their achievement and were looking forward to showing it to their children and others in their social environment.

Figure 3: A group picture after the certificate ceremony (with the parents who agreed upon being photographed).

DISCUSSION

Main findings

This research explored the feasibility elements of SWOI. A multimethod approach was applied, including intake forms, a midpoint evaluation, final interviews, informal conversations, and observations. The results highlighted that the intervention may be considered feasible. Parents valued the lesson materials provided and showed pride in their learning, which was amplified by the certificate ceremony. Nevertheless, the parents' feedback suggested that group dynamics sometimes resulted in a lack of order in the classroom. While this can be considered a pitfall of group learning (Jones, 2007), the results suggest added value and perceived benefits of learning in a group of likeminded people. A recommendation for practice would nevertheless be to ensure properly skilled trainers who can maintain order in the classroom.

The intervention targeted all four phases of internet appropriation—*attitude and motivation, material access, skills*, and *usage* (Van Dijk, 2005), intending to elicit positive outcomes in diverse

life domains (Van Deursen & Helsper, 2018; Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2015). The findings of the evaluation are positive. The intervention provided parents with better technological resources, enhanced internet-related skills and knowledge, and improved self-esteem—elements highlighted by prior studies as lacking among those experiencing poverty (Mariën & Vleugels, 2011; Vranken et al., 2007). The research findings also align with research by Schuller et al. (2002). As they reported, learning has positive benefits at the personal and social levels. The results of the current study hint toward this too. The participating parents experienced a great sense of social bonding and gained more self-confidence. With respect to the latter, following prior findings of Holgersson et al. (2019), SWOI also indicates that sparking participants' curiosity for learning may minimize fears when using the internet. The interconnectedness of life domains should be addressed in this respect considering the element of intervention acceptability and suitability; increased self-confidence and social bonding must not be considered in isolation. When one feels more confident, one may also be more inclined to ask for help and hence strengthen their networks. While it is difficult to pinpoint exactly which intervention elements elicited the results, the integral approach designed in cocreation with the target audience at hand hints toward benefits to parents.

This research has diverse implications for practice, of which six prominent advices are summarized in Table 3. First, it advocates for integral approaches in intervention design. Second, following prior research (O'Cathain et al., 2019; Racine et al., 2022), SWOI highlights the added value of including stakeholder perspectives throughout the intervention design process. The inclusion of stakeholders is expected to have contributed to an intervention that was met with great enthusiasm. In terms of recruitment, one should consider places that the intended participants already visit. A lesson learned is, however, to include a preliminary check in participant recruitment to ensure participant-intervention fit. Additionally, the evaluation results underline the necessity

Table 3: Practical implications.

Hints of advice for practice
Apply integral approaches to ensure the achievement of benefits
Include diverse stakeholder perspectives in intervention design, apply cocreation
Recruit participants in places they visit, both physically and online
Include a preliminary check in recruitment to ensure participant-intervention fit
Include relevant partners early in the process, and introduce them during the intervention
Appoint an intervention coordinator as the central point of contact

of including relevant partners. Building upon each other's expertise proved invaluable. Similarly, the participants appreciated being introduced to the intervention partners in person during the intervention, ideally at the beginning. Finally, added value was shown in appointing an intervention coordinator who serves as the prime contact person. While this does require an investment of time and manpower, parents found it valuable to have this point of contact.

Limitations and future research directions

SWOI covered a time period of three months, and the evaluation interviews were planned shortly after the end of the intervention. While this approach enabled us to obtain a view of the parents' experiences and some benefits gained on personal and social levels, it did not enable us to measure the long-term benefits of SWOI. For example, parents may achieve economic benefits when they are better aware of how to utilize the internet. Evaluation studies aiming to measure long-term intervention effects should include a measurement point after a longer period. It should also be noted that the results in this article are based on qualitative responses from 14 parents. When the program is continued, it is advisable to conduct new evaluations, in which the trainer evaluations may also be included. Now, teachers' insights were not explicitly measured. As their perspectives may be valuable for intervention improvement, for example, in terms of what they may need to keep order in the classroom or what they may need regarding trainer training, future evaluations may include trainer perspectives. This could be implemented by conducting short interviews with all the trainers after their respective training sessions.

In addition, we critically reflect on the research methodology. The evaluation of the intervention was primarily conducted from the researcher's perspective. Whereas action research would be based on constant collaboration in which participants act as co-researchers (Van Lieshout et al., 2021), the results of this study were interpreted by the researcher, who then made recommendations for future interventions. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the intervention has been developed in close consultation with key stakeholders, from contents to practicalities (Boerkamp et al., 2024b, 2025, in press). The results of the evaluation also gave no cause for further investigation. We therefore did not want to burden the participants with additional questions. In case of conflicting evaluations or identified gaps, however, a valuable step for follow-up research would be to reconvene with parents after the evaluation to jointly revise the program, thereby increasing their involvement and enhancing the long-term chances of success.

Finally, although the study primarily yielded positive evaluations, a cautious note is warranted in this respect. Previous research indicates that power imbalances can be difficult to fully eliminate, despite substantial efforts (Boone et al., 2019). This implies that some parents may have been inclined to provide socially desirable responses. Nevertheless, throughout the study, choices were continuously made to create the safest possible environment for the participants. These ranged from choosing an accessible location to providing support in a group of like-minded people. In addition, the principal researcher was always the designated point of contact. In the observations, we saw that parents seemed comfortable speaking up, and in the final interviews, several parents indicated that they appreciated the pleasant and open atmosphere.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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