



The Contribution of Early Childhood Development and Family on Primary School Performance in 11 districts in Rwanda



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Contents

- Background
- Methodology
- Results
- Program implications



Background

- Over the last few years, Early Childhood Development and Family (ECD & F) has emerged as one of the priority areas for development in Rwanda, as a means to develop human capital, towards achieving the vision of a knowledge based economy;
- The aim is to increase the access to ECD & F services from 13% (in 2015) to 45% by 2024, and reduce stunting from 38% (in 2015) to 19% by 2024.
- To address this issue, the ECD & F programme is providing an integrated package of interventions.
- Investments in ECD & F in Rwanda are an effective means to ensure that all children are prepared to start school at the right age, and are developmentally on track.

Why we invest in children



A Call from our high level leadership

“~ “A seed well planted, watered, nurtured and given all the necessary support successfully grows into a healthy plant – one that reaches high and stands tall.” ~

Programme Intervention

- Since 2013, in partnership with UNICEF, Imbuto Foundation has been implementing the ECD & F programme.
- The programme targets children between the ages of 0 to 6 and their parents as primary caregivers. Below are the programme components:
 - Early learning;
 - Health;
 - Nutrition;
 - Hygiene/sanitation;
 - Child protection
- To-date, the programme has reached 20, 614 children and 18, 411 families in 15 districts across Rwanda.

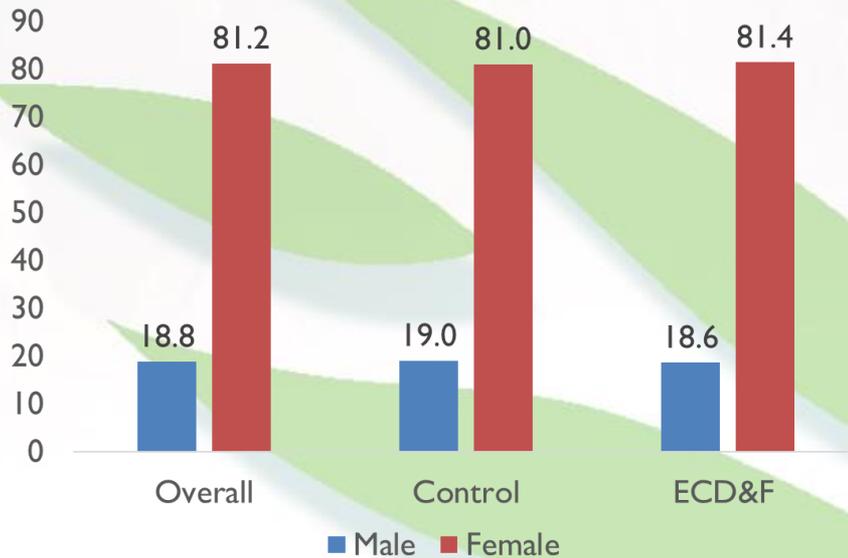
Methodology

- This study was cross-sectional, and followed a quasi-experimental design. It used quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Data were collected from engagements with primary caregivers and their children who benefitted from the ECD&F programme, and matched with comparison groups that were not exposed to ECD&F services (n=803). The response rate stood at 99.63%.
- Each selected primary caregiver had a child who had completed the first year of primary school.
- The descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses were used to generate the findings, using STATA v14.

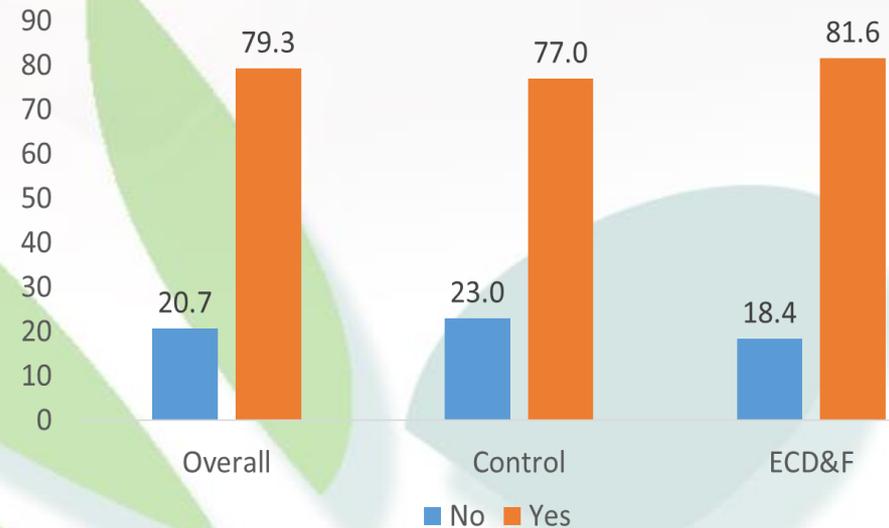
Key Findings

- The mean age of respondent caregivers at ECD&F interventions sites was 35.4 ± 4.5 years and 35.9 ± 4.9 years in control sites.

- % of primary caregivers' sex

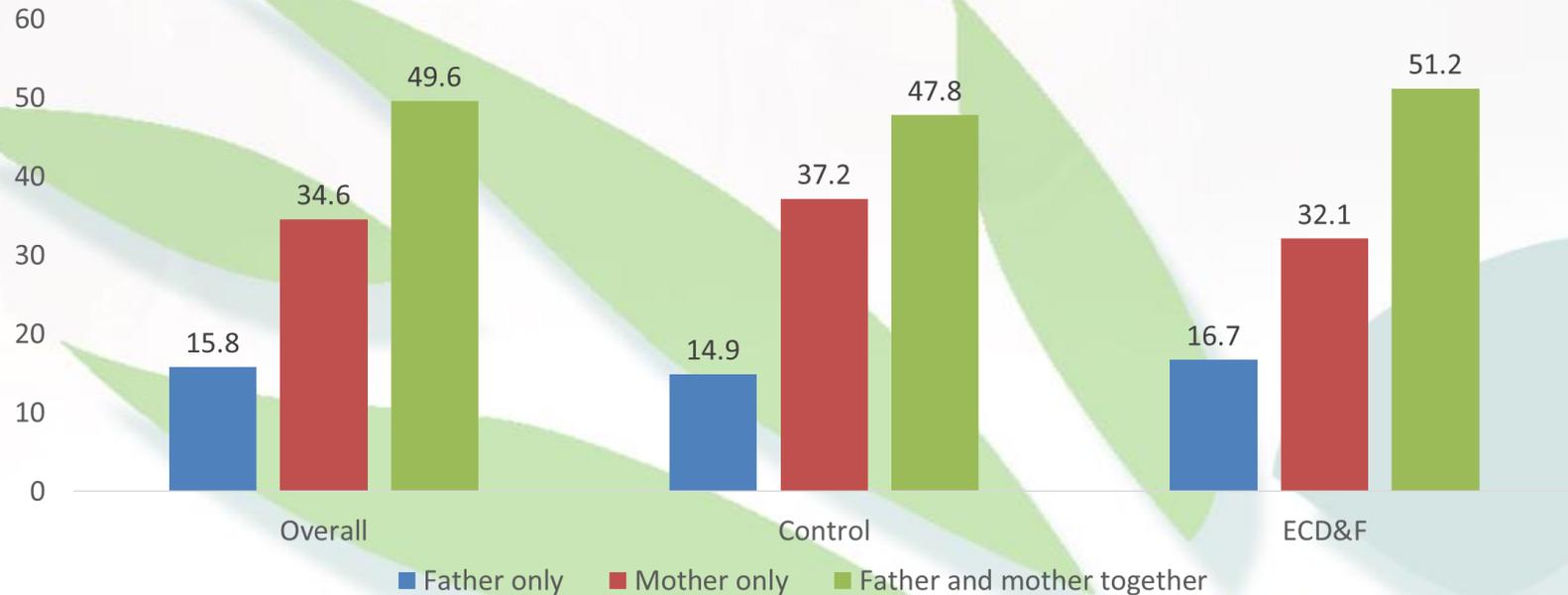


- % of caregivers who were able to read or write



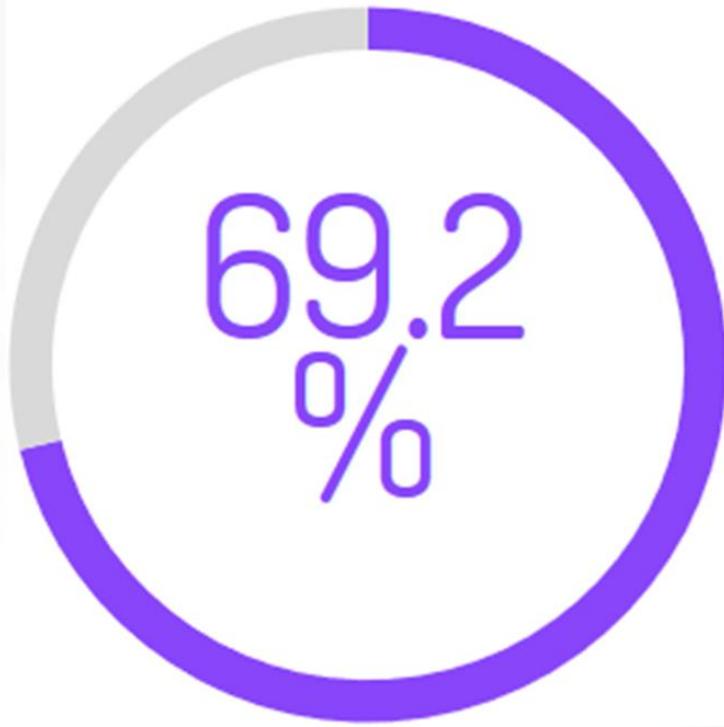
Key Findings (cont'd)

- **Who in the household decides whether a child attends primary school**



Key Findings (cont'd)

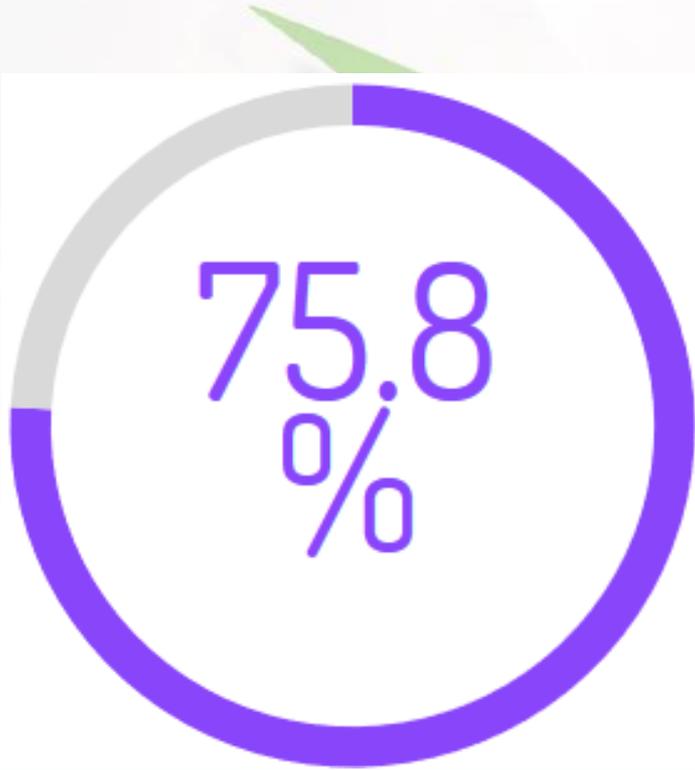
Respondent primary Caregivers' engagement in learning activities.



- 69.2% of caregivers were engaged in activities (singing a song; telling stories and teaching something new) to promote learning.
- However, in the control group, caregiver's engagement is at 30.8%.

Key Findings (cont'd)

ECD&F children's performance in Primary school.



- Children who benefitted from ECD & F services were likely to perform better in primary school compared to children from the control groups (75.8% vs. 68.2% respectively, $P < 0.001$).
- This indicates a positive spill over effects of the ECD & F programme on primary school performance.

Programme Implications

1. Through an integrated package of interventions, the ECD&F programme has demonstrated effectiveness in several important areas that are essential to improve child development.
2. The ECD&F programme successfully increased the access to ECD services, with a focus on reaching the poorest children in the community.
3. Caregiver and stakeholder perspectives on the ECD&F programme highlighted that the programme was valued by community members and viewed as having an overall positive impact on children's performance in primary school, family and broader community engagement.
4. Based on the experiences captured, the ECD&F programme should continue to promote family care practices, such as positive parenting, encouraging engagement with young children and in particular the engagement of the fathers.
5. Links with other social services should be strengthened.



Murakoze !

