



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



Felix Hagenimana, Gladys Mutavua, Jean de Dieu Kayiranga, Ildephonse Hitimana, Clement Kabiligi, Ingrid Karangwayire, Geraldine Umutesi, Sandrine Umutoni

Authors' institution: Imbuto Foundation

## Background

- Support to Early Childhood Development and Family (ECD&F) has emerged, over the past years, in Rwanda as one of the priority areas for development in Rwanda.
- The country has planned to increase the access to ECD&F services from 13% (in 2015) to 45% by 2024.
- Similarly, it intends to reduce stunting from 38% (in 2015) to 19% by 2024.
- Investments in ECD&F in Rwanda would be an effective means of ensuring all children are prepared to start school at the right age and to combat the current primary drop out (12.2%) and repetition rates (14%).
- To address this issue, the ECD&F programme is providing an integrated package of interventions, focusing on early learning, health, nutrition, hygiene and child protection to increasing the access of ECD&F services by children in Rwanda.
- Imbuto Foundation, in partnership with UNICEF, has been implementing the ECD&F programme since 2013.
- Since 2013, the programme has reached 101,845 children between the ages of 0 to 6 years enrolled in model and homebased ECD&F within our areas of intervention.
- The objective of this analysis was to assess the impact of ECD&F in primary school performance in 11 districts with ECD&F centres of excellence.

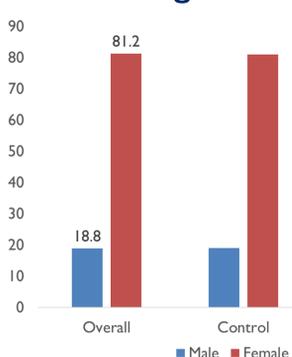
## Methodology

- This was a quasi-experimental study. 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 comparison groups that were not exposed to ECD&F services (n=803).
- Each selected primary caregiver had a child in primary school and who had completed the first year.
- The descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses were used to generate the findings, using STATA v14.

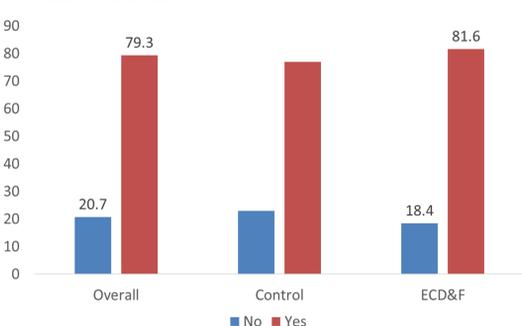
## Key Findings

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

### % of caregivers' sex

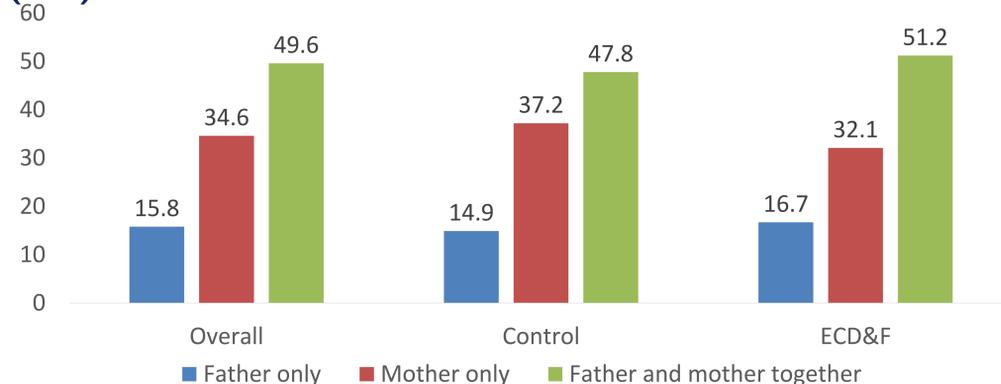


### % of caregivers who were able to read or write

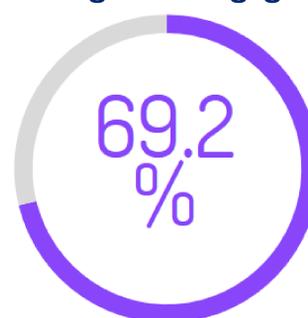


## Key Findings (cont.)

### Who in the household decides whether a child attends primary school (in %)

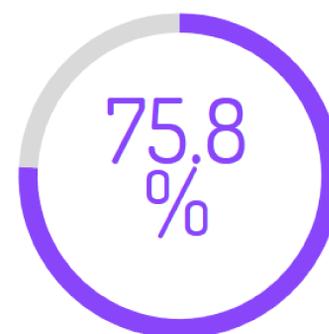


### Caregivers' engagement in learning activities.



- 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%.

### ECD&F children's performance in Primary school.



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

## Programme Implication

- Through an integrated package of interventions, the ECD&F programme has demonstrated effectiveness in several important areas that are essential to improve child development.
- The ECD&F programme successfully increased the access to ECD services, with a focus on reaching the poorest children in the community.
- Caregiver and stakeholder perspectives on the ECD&F programmes 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.
- 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.
- Links with other social services should be strengthened.

• **Key words:** ECD&F, Children, Primary, Performance.

• **For more information:** [www.imbutofoundation.org](http://www.imbutofoundation.org)

