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**COCOA**  
Initiative

# What is the impact of the *Families Make the Difference* parenting skills training in cocoa communities?

Findings from a pilot project  
in Côte d'Ivoire

November 2025







# *The Families Make the Difference* program



11 training sessions on positive parenting, communication, child development, etc.



11 cocoa-growing communities covered by a CLMRS in Côte d'Ivoire



June and August 2024



The background image shows a rural village scene. In the foreground, there are several long, low tables or racks made of bamboo or wood, covered with a thick layer of small, reddish-brown beans or seeds, likely for drying. The racks are supported by wooden poles. In the background, there are traditional houses with mud-brick walls and thatched roofs, surrounded by lush green trees and vegetation. The sky is overcast.

## Research objectives

Assess the effects of the *Families Make the Difference* intervention on caregivers' knowledge of parenting practices, caregiver-child interactions, parental violence, child labour, and child well-being.

## Methodology

The study compared changes in households before (January 2024) and after the parenting programme (January 2025), and with a comparison group of similar communities where the programme was not implemented.



Key findings:  
Who attended the  
sessions?

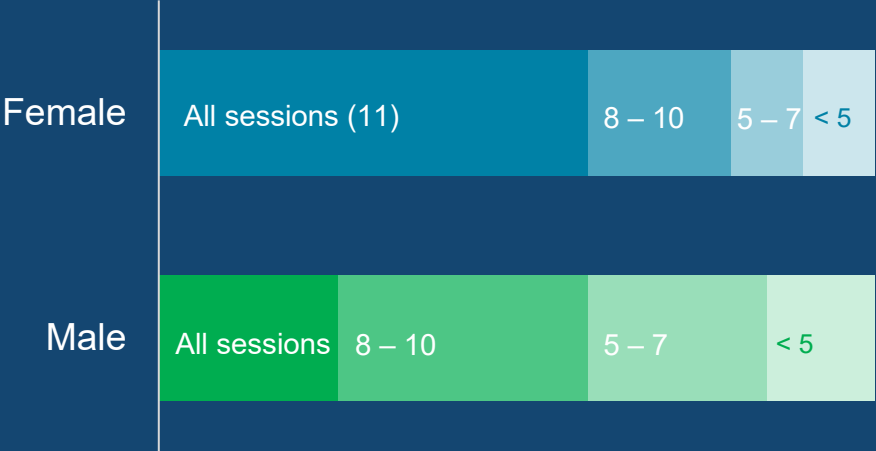




52% of treatment households had a caregiver attend at least one FMD session



Men and women were equally likely to attend at least one session, but women participated more regularly





Key findings:  
Impact on the  
child's household  
environment







## Parenting knowledge

Caregivers in FMD communities improved their parenting knowledge more than those in control communities, especially women.



## Caregiver–child interactions

Caregivers and children in FMD communities reported an increase in interactions among them, such as talking, reading, and playing together, compared to control communities.



## Violent practices

Adults in the treatment group reported using violent discipline less often compared to the control group.

However, children's reports did not confirm this trend.



A woman and a young girl are sitting on a wooden bench in front of a building. The woman is wearing a patterned headscarf and a matching patterned dress. The girl is wearing a yellow patterned dress. In the background, there is a building with a patterned curtain and some red and green plastic containers.

“

*What I appreciated most about the programme was learning about empathy, how to play with children, share responsibilities at home, and build harmony and understanding within the couple.*

Female participant

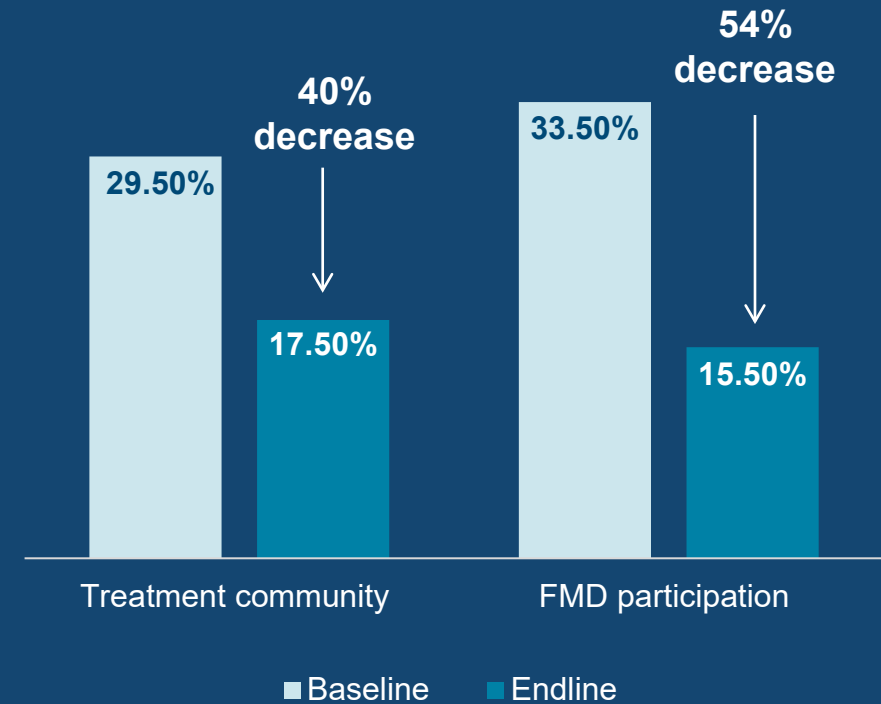


Key findings:  
Impact on child  
labour





# The *Families Make the Difference* program significantly **reduced** hazardous child labour



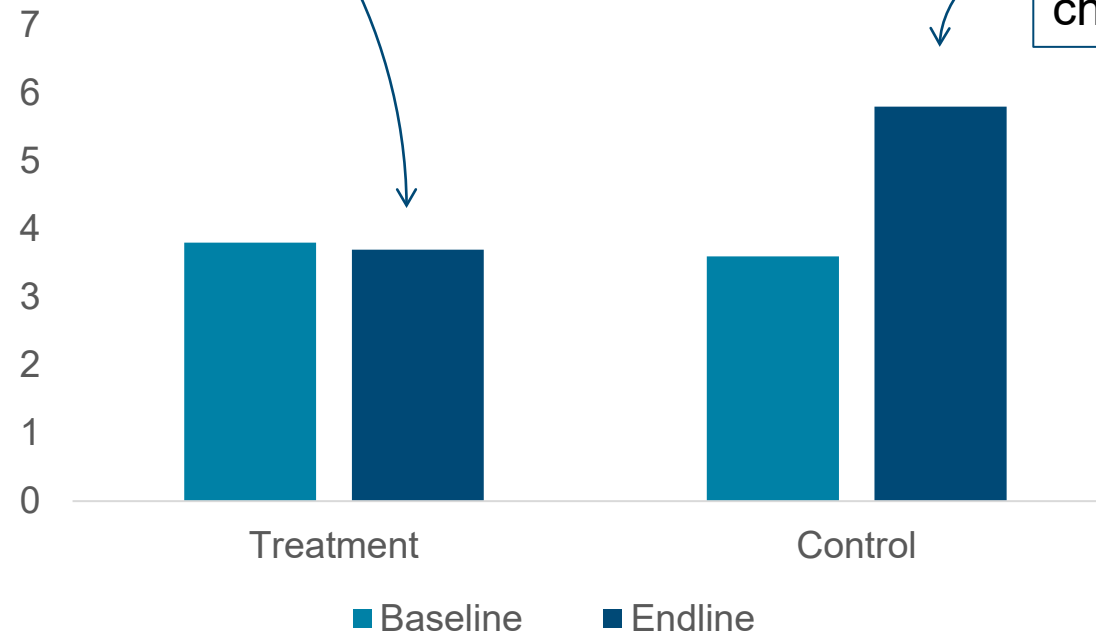
The reduction in hazardous child labour was independent of children's attendance at school, suggesting it resulted from changes *within the child's immediate household* environment



# The *Families Make the Difference* program helped prevent a rise in children's working time

Children in the treatment group worked *fewer* hours per week at endline compared to baseline...

...while working hours *increased* significantly among children in control communities







“

*The programme taught me the importance of talking with my children to understand their needs, to follow their schoolwork, and not to hit them. It also taught me that when children come with us to the farm, they should only help with small tasks, like bringing water or placing seedlings.*

Female participant

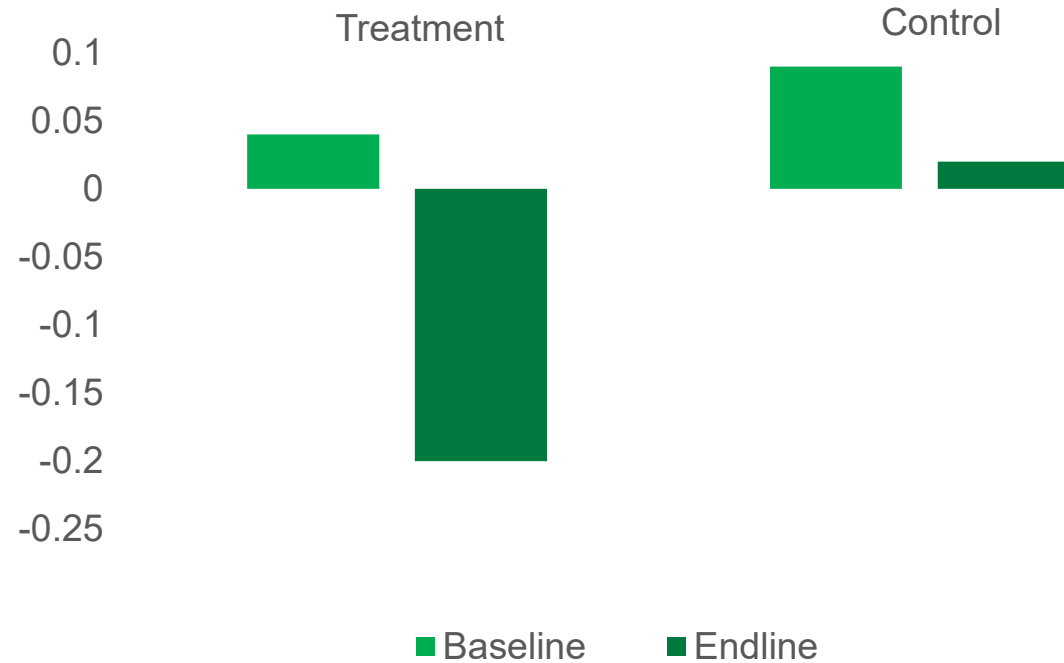


Key findings:  
Impact on children's  
well-being





# Children's well-being *decreased* in both control and treatment communities...



This finding is unexpected, as reduced exposure to hazardous child labour observed in the *Families Make the Difference* group would typically be associated with improved well-being

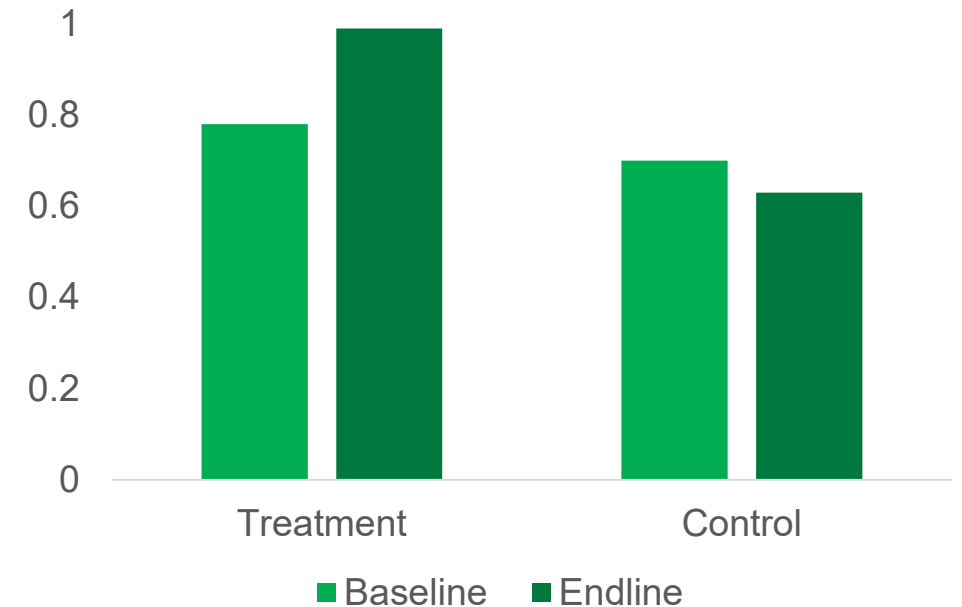


# What happened for children's well-being to decrease?

## Teacher violence

The share of children reporting being beaten by their teacher **increased** within the treatment group, especially when compared to the control group.

Data shows that this **contributed to lower well-being** scores.



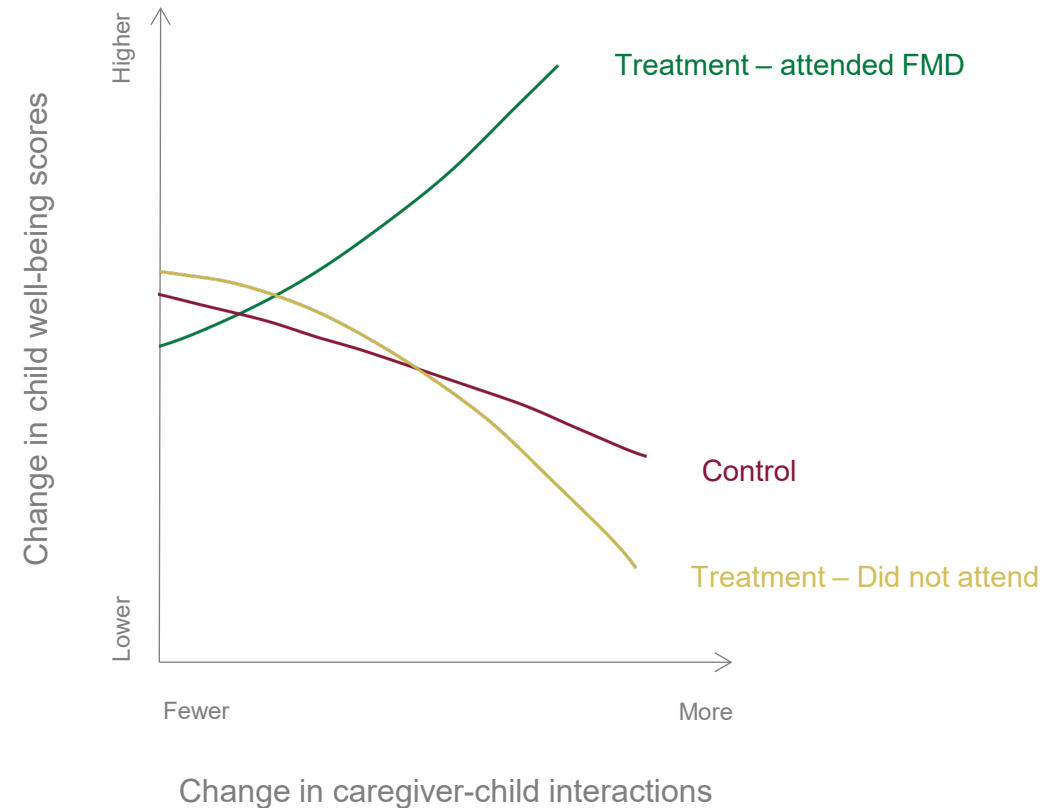


# What happened for children's well-being to decrease?

Children's well-being depended on whether their caregivers participated in the *Families Make the Difference* workshops

When caregivers attended *Families Make the Difference* workshops, more frequent interactions were linked to improved child well-being (green line).

But for caregivers that *didn't* attend, more frequent interactions were linked to lower well-being, suggesting the interactions were negative (e.g. scolding, shouting, etc) or less supportive.





# Key takeaways

The *Families Make the Difference* programme:

- ✓ Strengthened caregivers' knowledge and practices
- ✓ Reduced hazardous child labour
- ✓ Protected children from increases in working hours
- ✓ Increased children's well-being when caregivers attended the sessions







# Recommendations



**Scale up** the *Families Make the Difference* programme to reach more parents and caregivers



**Run multiple** *Families Make the Difference* groups per community to reach more households and foster broader participation



**Go beyond caregivers** to include teachers, to discourage teachers from using violent discipline



**Link with other programmes** tackling child labour



Thank you!

Discover more in the [summary report](#).



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