

ForAfrika Rwanda Case Study

From surviving to thriving: using Early Childhood Development centres as a gateway to community transformation

AUTHORS

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Introduction

ForAfrika is the largest African humanitarian and development organisation working for an Africa that thrives. By 2030, our goal is to empower 20-million African people to sustainably provide for themselves.

Despite Rwanda's impressive turnaround and economic progress since the devastation of the 1994 genocide, there are still pockets of poverty in the country where people are struggling to find employment and feed their families and where malnutrition in children is increasing, while education remains low. Although community childcare centres exist in these areas, they are often not conducive to learning, health or safety. However, they are gathering places for the community.

ForAfrika is working through community Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres focusing on children aged 3 – 6 years, to reach the most vulnerable families through education; WASH; health and nutrition; food security and economic empowerment interventions.

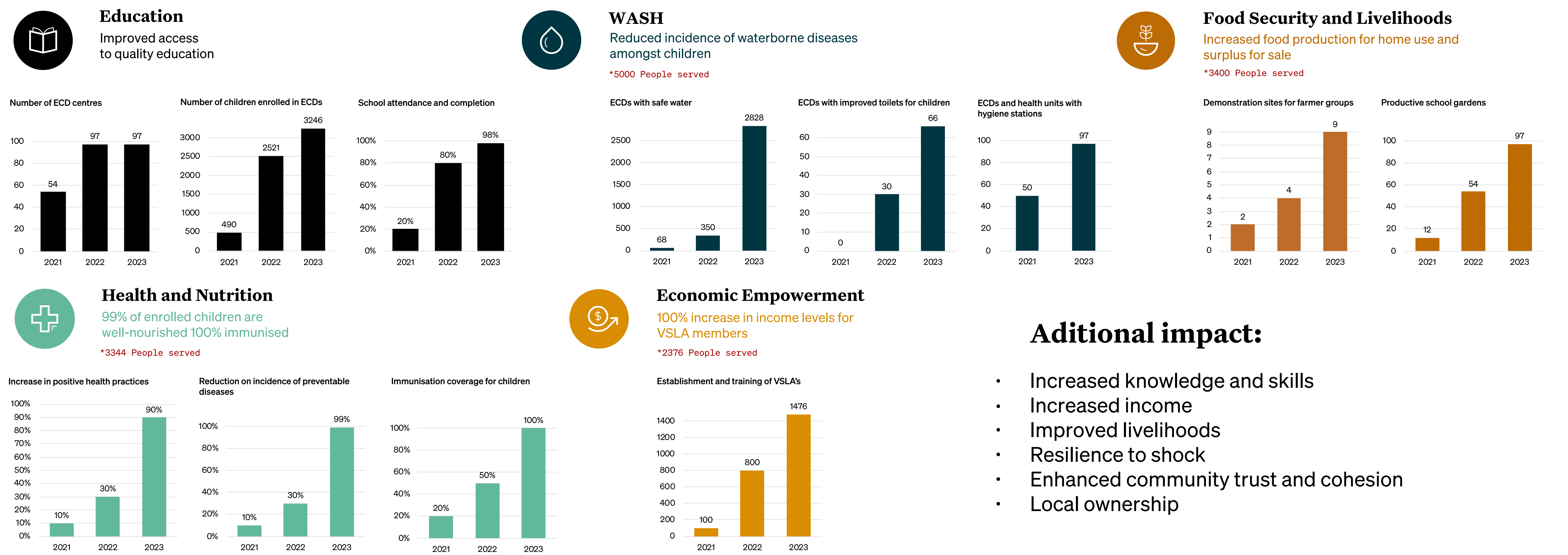
ForAfrika realised the opportunity these centres provide as an entry point for humanitarian and development workers to launch integrated programmes that will reach vulnerable communities. If these informal centres could be more formally organised, they could serve different, yet integrated purposes. They could become a hub of learning for children and adults alike, where the learning would support our goal of assisting people to sustainably provide for themselves and their families.



Objectives

1. To explore whether the ECD centre could be used as the gateway to access vulnerable communities.
2. To explore how the specific programmes and interventions could successfully lead to community transformation and sustainable development.

Results



Additional impact:

- Increased knowledge and skills
- Increased income
- Improved livelihoods
- Resilience to shock
- Enhanced community trust and cohesion
- Local ownership

Conclusion

This study shows that ECD centres can be a vital and effective entry point for integrated sustainable community development, which is owned by the community. ForAfrika's model in Rwanda demonstrates significant benefits in improved child growth, development and education; improved child and maternal nutrition; increased food security and livelihoods; communities that were categorised as ultra-poor have transformed into vibrant and resilient households with a collective income of USD8,000 generated from VSLA groups. Climate smart agriculture has helped feed children at schools and households and built community resilience to shocks.

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