

An Intervention to Engage Fathers in Supporting Child Nutrition Increases Children's Animal Source Food Consumption in Rwanda



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BACKGROUND

- Consumption of animal source foods (ASFs) is low among children in Rwanda
- Fathers are key influencers of child feeding practices
- Little evidence exists on effective ways to engage fathers in supporting child feeding, including ASF consumption

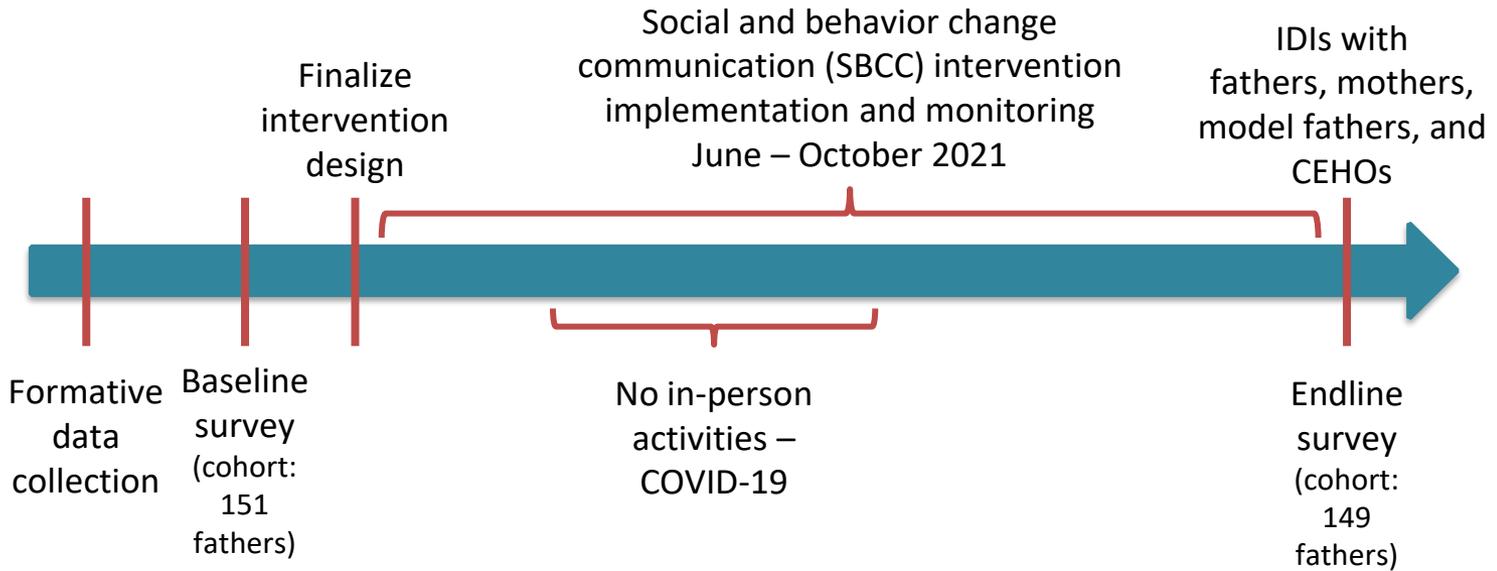




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STUDY TIMELINE AND METHODS

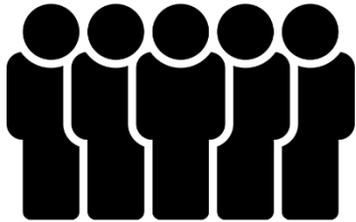


CEHOs, community health extension officers; IDs, in-depth interviews





SBCC INTERVENTION COMPONENTS AND FATHERS' INTERVENTION EXPOSURE



98% of fathers heard about ASFs or participated in community-based trainings where ASFs were discussed



94% of fathers saw the leaflet and 55% saw the poster



86% of fathers received information about ASFs from a model father



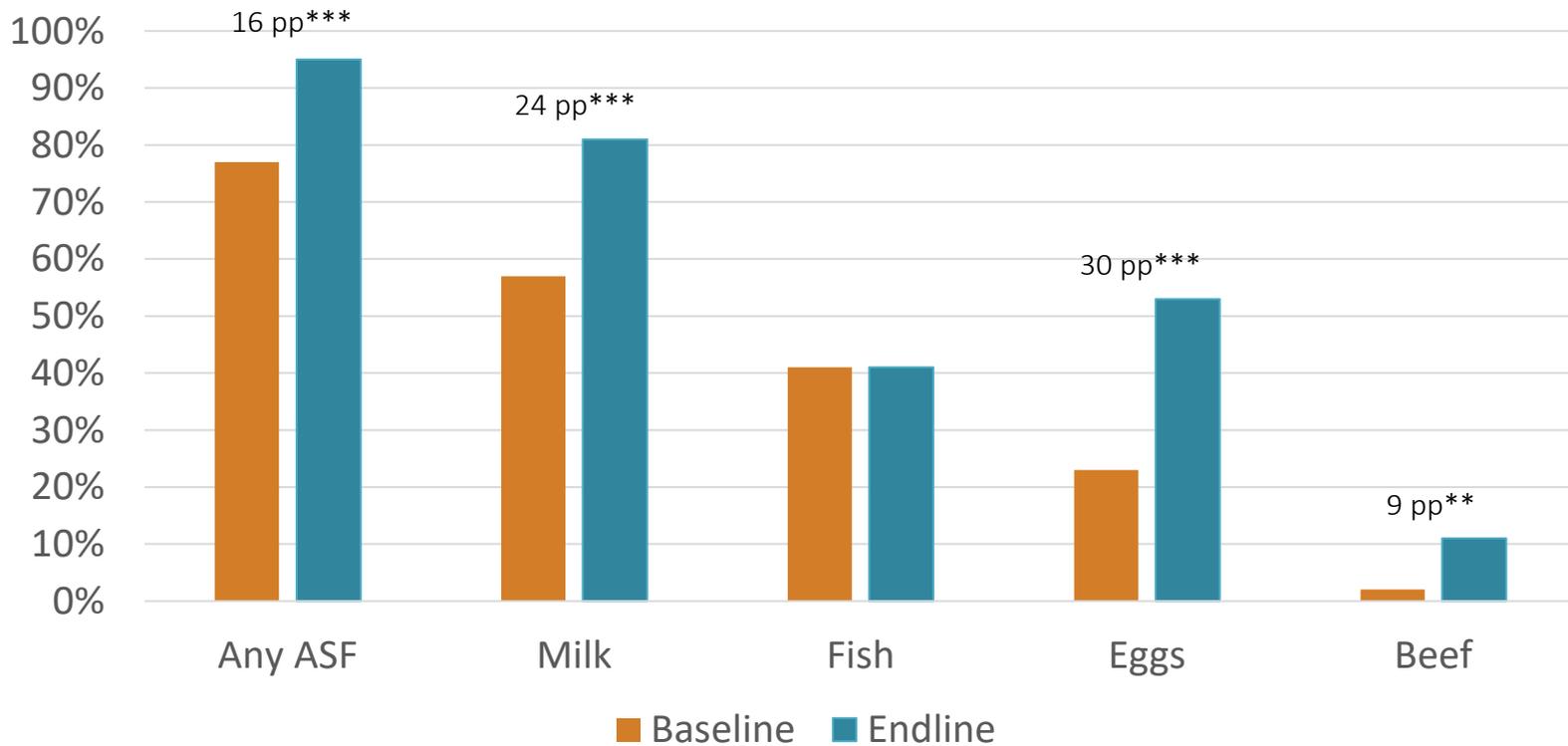
75% of fathers received text messages

ASF, animal source food; SBCC, social and behavior change communication





CHILDREN'S CONSUMPTION OF ASF_s 2 OR MORE TIMES IN THE PAST 7 DAYS INCREASED



** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. ASF, animal source food; pp, percentage point



FATHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS INCREASED

	Baseline %	Endline %	pp difference
Foods a young child needs to grow and develop their brain			
Meat or chicken	49	56	7
Fish	34	68	34***
Eggs	38	69	31***
Milk and dairy products	42	62	20***
Ever heard about feeding a child ASFs	91	99	8**
Ever heard about feeding a child one cup of milk per day	79	99	20***
Ever heard about starting to feed the child cow milk at 12 months	79	97	18***

** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$. ASF, animal source food; pp, percentage point

SOME TYPES OF FATHERS' SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S ASF CONSUMPTION CHANGED AND JOINT HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING INCREASED

Type of support from fathers	Children's milk consumption			Children's other ASF consumption		
	Baseline %	Endline %	pp difference	Baseline %	Endline %	pp difference
Make sure own production goes to children	59	56	-3	24	46	22***
Give wife money to buy for children	39	38	-1	72	54	-18***
Buy for children himself	11	23	12*	13	26	13**
Advise wife to give to children	6	16	10**	3	16	13**

** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$. ASF, animal source food; pp, percentage point

- Joint household decision-making about home-produced milk increased from 66% to 79%, 13pp**



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QUALITATIVE RESULTS

For the poster, I liked the way it was designed with clear and understandable messages explaining how a father can contribute to his children's wellbeing.

—CEHO, 37 years old

As I am focusing on milking, the text messages remind me not to sell all the milk but to make sure I keep some and feed it to my family. This helps my family to grow strong and healthy.

—Father, 38 years old

I liked that I gained knowledge about balanced diets for my children and when they can start to drink milk.

—Father, 48 years old

CEHO, community health extension officer



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CONCLUSIONS

- SBCC intervention for fathers increased children's consumption of milk, eggs, and beef, but not children's consumption of fish.
- Fathers' knowledge and awareness about ASFs increased.
- Fathers' support for children's ASF consumption shifted.
- Joint household decision-making by mothers and fathers on use of home-produced milk increased.
- Fathers liked the intervention and the action-oriented messages.

Contact vflax@rti.org to learn more.

