# Improving Nutrition through Community Growth Promotion: Longitudinal Study of the Nutrition and Early Child Development Program in Uganda

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**Abstract**

Community based growth promotion is a widely advocated but less studied means to improve child nutrition in low income countries. Using a longitudinal comparison of treatment and control communities, this paper indicated a significant impact of one such program, in Uganda, on the nutritional status of children less than one year of age in the treatment group. There was a concomitant improvement in breast feeding and weaning practices in these communities.

**Gender Connection**

Gender Informed Analysis

**Gender Outcomes**

Gender disaggregated nutrition, income

**IE Design**

Difference in Difference

**Intervention**

The program has three board aims: help communities organize services of children under 6 through monitoring and promotion and Early Childcare Education Facilities; providing sensitization and skills training on early childhood development; and provide community grants and incentives. Activities were divided into community, parish and national and district levels. Communities in the program had access to a $1,500 grant. Additionally, one treatment group was administered albendazole, a de-worming drug.

**Intervention Period**

The project started in 1998, many communities did not begin to receive the program until late 2001.

**Sample population**

50 parishes were randomly selected to be part of the sample. Two villages from each parish were chosen. A census was taken of all households in each village and a random draw of households with at least one young child was selected. The questionnaire was administered to 2250 households, 750 in each stratum.

**Comparison conditions**

There were three treatment groups, one received all Early Childhood Development Services and de-worming drugs, another received just ECD services, and the final was a control group which received no services.

**Unit of analysis**

Household level

**Evaluation Period**

January 2000 - 2003
Results | The program had a significant positive, but modest, impact on per capita income. The program had no significant impact on sanitation. On average, girls have better nutrition than boys. The project had a greater effect on younger children. Treatment communities also had a significant increase in self-reported diet diversification. The number of times that growth promoting food was consumed was 20% higher in treated communities.

Primary study limitations | The regression used in this study explains a small portion of the overall variance.
