

CASH+: AN OPENING FOR BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTIONS

Parenting groups, cash transfers, and behavioural interventions

April 2023

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WHAT IS BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE?

Even the best of solutions do not always lead to the desired outcomes



IMPLEMENTING THIS APPROACH IN MADAGASCAR

Madagascar's Human Development Cash Transfer, A unique opportunity to explore "Cash Plus"



DEFINE

DIAGNOSE

DESIGN

TEST

SCALE

Mothers we spoke with....

- ✓ **Cite clear ambition** for children to escape poverty
- ✓ **Understand** that children must develop healthily in order to have a chance to do so
- ✓ **Know** which food groups (and parenting activities) promote healthy development
- ✗ **Don't think that they use the money** they receive effectively to pursue these goals



DEFINE

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SCALE

Self efficacy

Feeling of powerlessness: Why should I work towards long-term goals if I can't afford the basic items I need to get there?

Feeling of stagnation: My family has always lived in poverty; what makes me different?

The spending journey

No moment to plan: Participants have no logical opportunity to plan spending on payment day and end up focused in on their daily needs

Market environment: Participants come together at the market to receive their money, where it's tempting as others seem to be doing



DEFINE

DIAGNOSE

DESIGN

TEST

SCALE



Mother Leader Groups

Women elected by their peers facilitate support groups oriented around investing in their children's health, nutrition, and cognitive stimulation



Self-affirmation activities

Activities were designed to bolster identity as guardians and highlight the power they have to improve the lives of their children



Plan-making

Assessing risk and identifying concrete action steps improves the likelihood of follow-through

DEFINE**DIAGNOSE****DESIGN****TEST****SCALE****Eligible**

51 communes
~51,000 households

Cash

38 communes

Control

13 communes

Cash only

77 villages
(1204 HH)

Mother Leaders

77 villages
(1200 HH)

MLs + Planning

77 villages
(1197 HH)

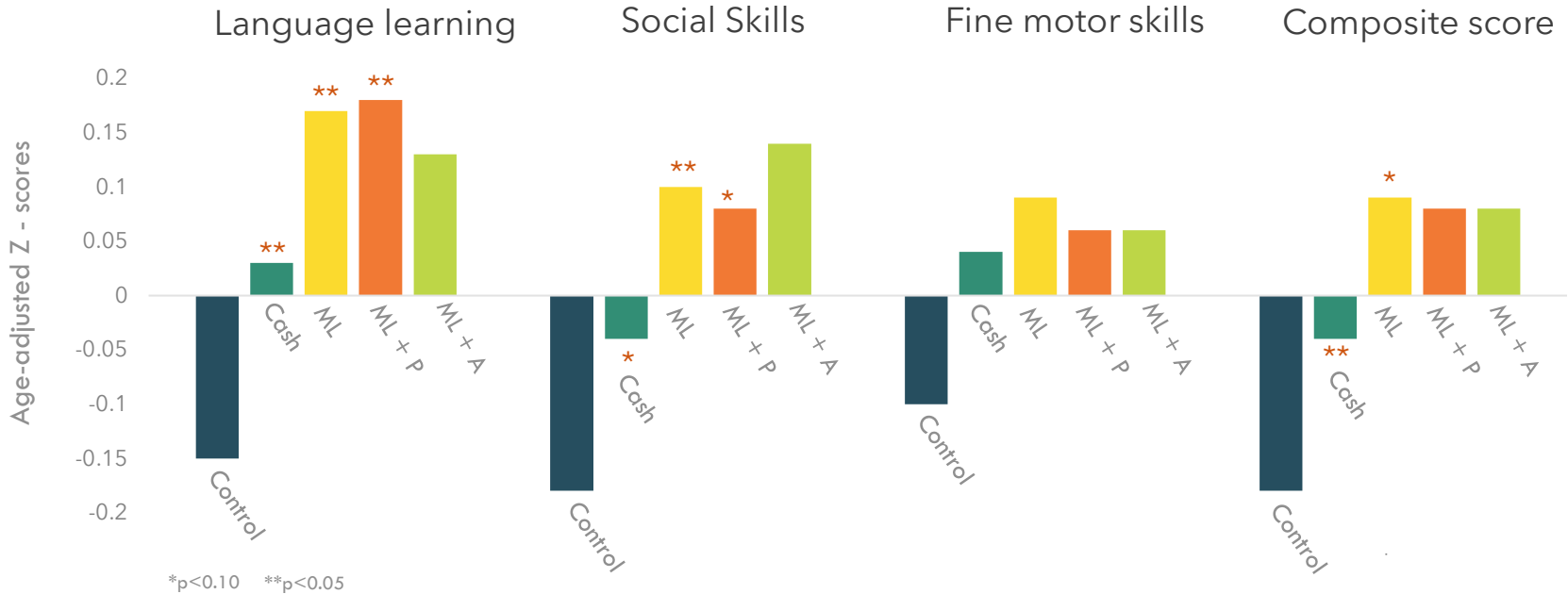
**MLs +
Affirmation**

78 villages
(1205 HH)

RESULTS



Meaningful improvements in child development



*DEFINE**DIAGNOSE**DESIGN**TEST**SCALE*

Designs were 1.3 (affirmation) to 1.5 (plan making) times more effective at improving child development scores

DEFINE

DIAGNOSE

DESIGN

TEST

SCALE

“

“ We used to live in a small house made of banana leaves, with the transfer I was able **better manage our expenses and invested** in my small grocery shop, we now have a house made of bricks”

-Female beneficiary

“

“I am now able to meet my family needs, **my children are well fed** and my household is well managed.

- Female beneficiary

Government of Madagascar has scaled these designs to all ~45,000 participants

In summary:



Community-delivered content (Mother Leaders) is most effective **when combined with cognitive decision-making support** (“nudges”)



Payment ‘moments’ can be a powerful opportunity to help participants decide how they will use their participation to improve their families’ lives



Cash transfers can be made **more cost-effective** when combined with “cash plus” supports for decision-making and action-taking



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