

## CORE PROJECT MODEL EVIDENCE BRIEF

*This brief summarizes research focused on impact or behaviour change achieved through the Learning Roots project model.*

### SUMMARY OF MODEL

The **Learning Roots (LR)** project model is designed to meet the development and learning needs of children 3 to 6 years old. The model prepares children for a successful transition to primary school through play-based, holistic and integrated early childhood development (ECD) interventions.

The Learning Roots model has three core components:

- **Engaging parents and caregivers and strengthening their capacity to support ECD** – Awareness is raised on the importance of the early years; Competencies are enhanced to support social and emotional development of young children and early reading and numeracy skills through play in a loving, caring home environment
- **Strengthening the ECD Centre learning environment** – Teachers are trained on effective play-based learning practices for child development; Professional development systems are enhanced for teachers' continuous learning and improvement of nurturing and inclusive practices
- **Strengthening systems that support children, their families and their communities** – Partnerships are fostered between the community and formal education sector institutions, such as the local or district Ministry of Education, and informal ECD centre management; policies that enable quality pre-primary education are supported; the integration of services to provide holistic support for children in the early years is promoted.

The Learning Roots model is built on prevailing peer-reviewed evidence from research and best practice. It draws on the recommendations from the Lancet series (2007 and 2011) on Early Childhood Development, as well as from best practices identified through World Vision Field Offices and peer agencies Plan International and Save the Children.

Building on World Vision's experience in ECD, the Learning Roots model was adopted in 2017 and was first piloted in Ethiopia and Thailand. Learning Roots can be integrated with Go Baby Go! or nutrition programmes. In 2019 alone, Learning Roots was implemented by at least 10 Field Offices.

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# LEARNING ROOTS

## RESEARCH FOCUSED ON WORLD VISION MODEL

### TITLE:

**Foundational Development for Afghan Children at Early Years (FACE) Project Endline Assessment**

**RESEARCH TYPE:** Endline assessment

**PUBLISHED:** World Vision, 2019

### OVERVIEW:

The FACE Project addressed the holistic development of children in 14 targeted communities, adapting the Learning Roots model for implementation in the Badghis and Herat Provinces of Afghanistan. A baseline study was conducted in April 2018 and an endline study was conducted at the end of the project in December 2018 with the same groups of children, caregivers, and ECD Management Committees (MC) members, to assess the changes and improvements, if any, brought by the project. The assessment included 407 children (199 girls and 208 boys) enrolled in ECD centers, 407 caregivers, and 70 ECD MC members. The Save the Children International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) child assessment tool was administered with children, measuring age-appropriate social-emotional, motor, emergent literacy, and emergent numeracy skills. The IDELA home learning environment survey was administered to caregivers to assess the learning environment for children at home, including family's wellbeing and its impact on early development of children, the caregivers' child rearing practices and knowledge related to child protection issues. The WV Afghanistan community survey questionnaire tool was administered with ECD MC members.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- After participating in the ECD program for 9 months, there was significant positive improvement in children's scores across core age-appropriate development domains, including physical (fine and gross motor skills), social-emotional, cognitive and language skills. The average score on all development domains increased from 23% of the total possible score at baseline to 85% at endline. These changes indicate that ECD interventions were effective and project interventions had a positive influence in making the family and community environment conducive for a holistic development for children in the early age stage.
- At baseline only 13% of participating children scored above the recommended threshold of 70% with the IDELA tool; at endline 87% of children scored above 70%.
- Girls in particular made significant gains. At baseline, boys' scores were almost double girls' scores. At endline, girls and boys were performing similarly well in all development domains.
- Quality and duration of parents' and caregivers' engagement and interaction with children substantially improved – the number engaged in three or more activities in the past week to promote learning increased from 50% at baseline to 94% at endline.



**TITLE:** Ethiopia Early Learning Evaluation

**RESEARCH TYPE:** Programme impact evaluation

**PUBLISHED:** World Vision, 2018

**OVERVIEW:**

**“World Vision has shown us the road map for how to enhance our children’s future potential.”**

*Animut Yeneayehu, ECD focal person, Jabi Tehnan District, Ethiopia*

The evaluation, which was conducted in the Gechi Area Programme in Oromia Region of Ethiopia, examined whether the Learning Roots project model and World Vision-sponsored ECD centers helped children become school ready and assessed parents’ roles in promoting learning for children ages 3 to 6. A total of 200 children at ECD centers (100 in the intervention group, at centers with LR programming, and 100 in a control group, without) were assessed using a School Readiness Assessment tool that uses a series of 19 questions to capture children’s literacy and math skills. A Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) assessment tool comprised of 33 questions was used to capture participating parents’ level of knowledge and engagement in their children’s development, including information on early stimulation and learning and child protection.

**KEY FINDINGS:**

- Children in the intervention group scored significantly higher than the control group on both literacy and math skills: For literacy measures, 66% of children in the intervention group scored above the mean (average) scores, compared with 19% of children in the control group. For math results, 77% of children in the intervention group scored above the average, compared with 36% of the children in the control group.
- Parents of children in the intervention ECD centers scored significantly higher on KAP assessments, signifying positive parenting behaviour to support children’s learning and development: 36% achieved scores in the 75-100 range; only 3% of parents in non-intervention ECD centers achieved scores at that level.

**TITLE:** Early Childhood Learning Roots Project Evaluation, Thailand

**RESEARCH TYPE:** Programme impact evaluation

**PUBLISHED:** World Vision, 2019

**OVERVIEW:**

The evaluation was designed to measure the impact of the Learning Roots pilot project conducted in 42 villages in 2 provinces of the northeastern region of Thailand. Baseline data was collected in June and July of 2017 and endline data was collected in January and February of 2019. The same group of 227 children (126 boys and 101 girls) participating in Learning Roots were tracked throughout the project implementation period, using the the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) tool, which assesses age-specific communication skills, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem solving skills and personal and social skills. Data was also collected for 197 parents/caregivers, using a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices survey that measures various aspects of parent’s care that impact early childhood development, for instance, development and learning stimulation, and health and nutrition; and for 39 ECD centers and primary schools, using the Measure of Early Learning Environment (MELE), a globally developed tool that explores school environments, including instruction, facilities, and amenities that facilitate early childhood development.

**KEY FINDINGS:**

- Children’s overall developmental scores increased from 42% to 75% as measured by the ASQ tool described above.
- Children’s scores for math skills increased from 36% to 64%, according to age-specific criteria.
- The percentage of parents and caregivers who participated in activities to promote learning for their children increased from 66% to 88%.
- The percentage of ECD centers and schools in the project implementing areas that achieved a quality measurement score of 80% or more, meaning they were considered to be receiving the appropriate amounts of support and assistance from community networks and the state, increased from 12% at baseline to 66% at endline.



**In 2019 alone, through World Vision's Learning Roots interventions\*:**

- 109,355 girls and boys ages 3 – 6 years in 17 countries participated in early childhood development programmes so they would be better prepared to enter primary school
- 28,067 parents and caregivers in 11 countries attended training in early childhood education and development, guiding them on how to support their young child's development
- 3,675 teachers in early learning centers in 14 countries completed a curriculum on educating young children, improving how they teach preschool-aged boys and girls

*\*As reported in the Global Dashboard for Monitoring Data  
Data extracted August 5, 2020  
Dashboard represents Horizon (sponsorship) data only*

**“I learned how playing with children can help them to grow mentally, and many other important things that helped me to create a happy life and healthy family. Now my child is ready to enter school next year. Thanks to World Vision for creating such an opportunity for mothers and their children.”**

*Soraya, a 25-year-old mother of two,  
Learning Roots participant, Afghanistan*

