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Partnerships between Church-based Programs and Community Service Providers

Couple Focused Program Provides Model for Uptake of Family Planning Services in Burundi



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The Context

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- Burundi has one of the highest fertility rates in the world (5.5 children per woman). Up to 31% of married women have an unmet need for family planning. (*DHS 2016-17*).
- Awareness about the benefits of healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy was high (76%) but FP uptake was low, especially for modern FP methods (14%).
- The targeted population was over 98% Christian, and religion plays a critical role in shaping the nature of couples' interactions, motivators to action, coordinated action, and FP outcomes. Prior to the project, faith leaders commonly opposed modern FP methods.
- Men and women reported a lack of trust in health facilities, community health workers (CHWs), and church leaders as sources of information for FP.



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The Program Intervention

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- Trained more than 820 church leaders from 394 churches in WR's Families for Life (FFL) couple-strengthening curriculum. Faith leaders diffused FP messages through sermons, pastoral counseling and community meetings.
- Recruited and trained 889 volunteer FFL Facilitator Couples. Facilitator Couples started FFL groups within their communities, reaching a total of 9,854 couples.
- Trained and supported CHWs from linked health facilities to understand the value of integrating couples' values into FP counseling.
- Facilitated monthly dialogues among faith leaders, facilitator couples, and CHWs as a way to continue to build trust and deepen collaboration.



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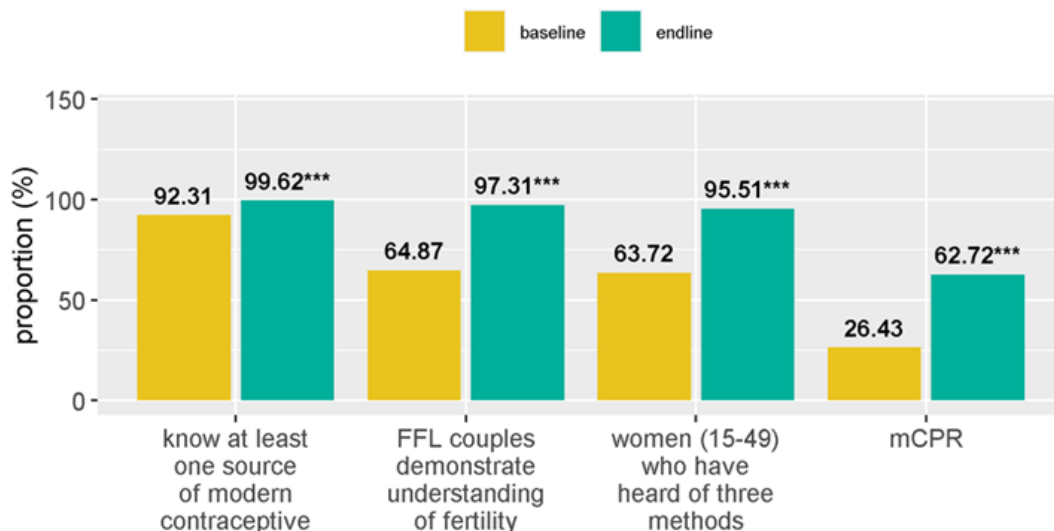
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The Results

Increased knowledge and practice of modern method contraception

(proportion responding 'Yes')



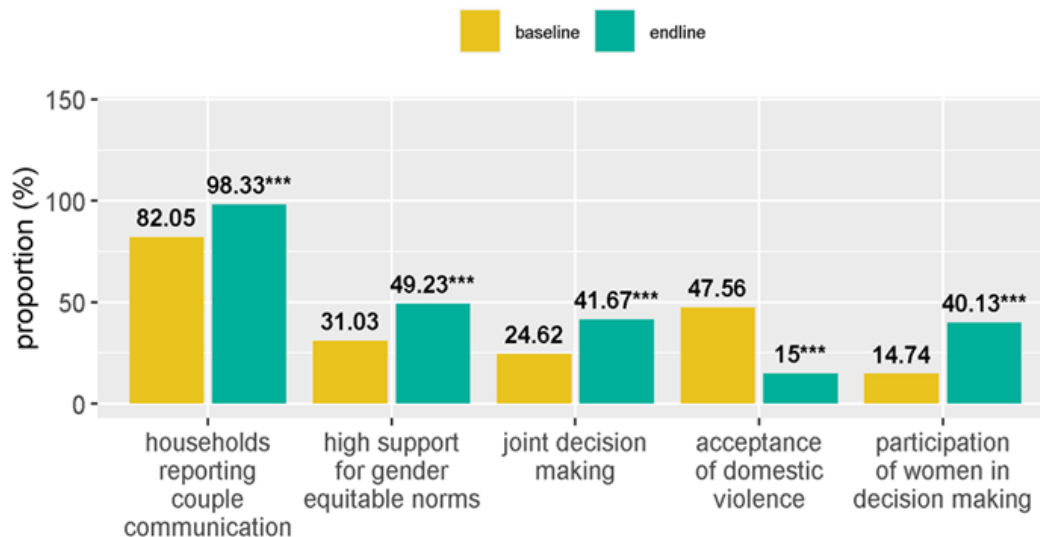
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The Results

Increased gender equity illustrated by increase in joint dialogue, decision making and intolerance for partner violence

proportion responding 'Yes'
baseline n=780 endline n=780



p-values.05=*, p-values.01=**, p-values.001=***



Lessons Learned

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- The FFL program provided a model for collaboration between church-based programs and community service providers.
- The program's layered intervention and linkage among couples, faith leaders, and CHWs multiplied the number of aligned SBCC messages.
- The monthly meetings informed CHWs of the community SBCC efforts, linked the faith leaders' efforts to the couples' intervention, and created a stronger two-way referral system between the SBCC intervention and the CHW's distribution of FP commodities.



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