

SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR HOME-BASED CHILD CARE: A GLOBAL STUDY

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Spring Impact is a non-profit that focuses purely on scaling social impact. Spring Impact was born out of the frustration of seeing social organizations constantly reinventing the wheel and wasting scarce resources. Using a combination of successful and tested commercial and social principles, while drawing on extensive practical expertise, Spring Impact helps organizations identify, design, and implement the right replication strategy and business model for scale. For more information on Spring Impact’s methodology, see our open-source Social Replication Toolkit which has assisted organizations to better understand and approach scale: <http://toolkit.springimpact.org>



Echidna Giving is a private funder focused on supporting the best ways to educate girls, working in lower-income countries to create a positive ripple effect in their families, communities, and nations.

GLOSSARY

Early childhood development (ECD)	The physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development of young children between zero to eight years of age
Home-based child care (HBCC)	A form of non-parental child care that takes place within the home of either the child or the provider, as opposed to a center or other setting
Primary caregiver (caregiver)	The main person or people caring for a child. In this report we distinguish primary caregivers from home-based child care providers, or ‘providers’
Provider	A non-parental caregiver providing care to a child, and who is also not the primary caregiver
Support programs for HBCC	Coordinated organizations, initiatives, and networks that have been designed to support HBCC providers in order to achieve three main aims: upskill and empower HBCC providers; increase access to quality HBCC for families; and ultimately support the healthy development of young children who receive this type of care



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Home-based child care (HBCC) is a form of non-parental child care that takes place within the home of either the child or the provider, as opposed to a center. Paid and unpaid forms of HBCC are widely used by families for many reasons including affordability, cultural relevance, and accessibility. Despite the prevalence of HBCC, there is little discourse about the programs that support HBCC providers to improve the quality of their child care and become economically empowered in this line of work.

We define **support programs for HBCC** as discrete organizations, initiatives, and networks that aim to do three things:

- 1 Support the healthy development of young children who receive HBCC
- 2 Improve skills and empower HBCC providers
- 3 Increase access to quality HBCC for families

Widespread provision of quality HBCC can allow for better child development outcomes, as well as provide numerous benefits for families and society, such as women’s economic empowerment and the creation of quality jobs. The effective scale of support programs that facilitate quality HBCC is crucial for realizing these benefits.

In order to effectively scale the impact of support programs for HBCC, more information is needed about how they operate and what lessons may be applied to the design of future policies and services. This report seeks to fill the knowledge gap by studying 11 examples of innovative supports for HBCC, understanding their defining features, and identifying lessons for others. We sought to answer two key questions:

- What are the defining features of emerging support programs for HBCC?
- What best practice and lessons can we learn from these support programs that can help to scale their impact worldwide?

In order to answer these questions, we first conducted a literature review to understand current thinking in the sector and to identify examples of quality support programs for HBCC. This was followed by a survey sent to a small group of global early childhood development (ECD) stakeholders and networks that support HBCC to understand areas for focus and the latest trends within the sector. Finally, we conducted interviews with representatives of 11 HBCC support programs. These 11 organizations were:

Table 1: List of featured support programs for HBCC

Organization or program name	Country of operation
All Our Kin	USA
Carinos	Brazil
Hogares Comunitarios de Bienestar (HCB) (Community Welfare Homes)	Colombia
Home Grown	USA
iACT’s Little Ripples program (Little Ripples)	Chad

Organization or program name	Country of operation
Kidogo	Kenya
Mobile Creches	India
OneSky's Migrant Model program (OneSky)	Vietnam
PACEY	UK
Relais Assistants Maternels (RAM)	France
SmartStart	South Africa

From the research, we identified themes in the following areas:

- The goals of the support programs
- Common features
- How these support programs are financed
- How quality is defined and supported
- Common challenges faced

Based on these themes, we developed the following emerging conceptual model for support programs for HBCC:

EMERGING CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR HBCC

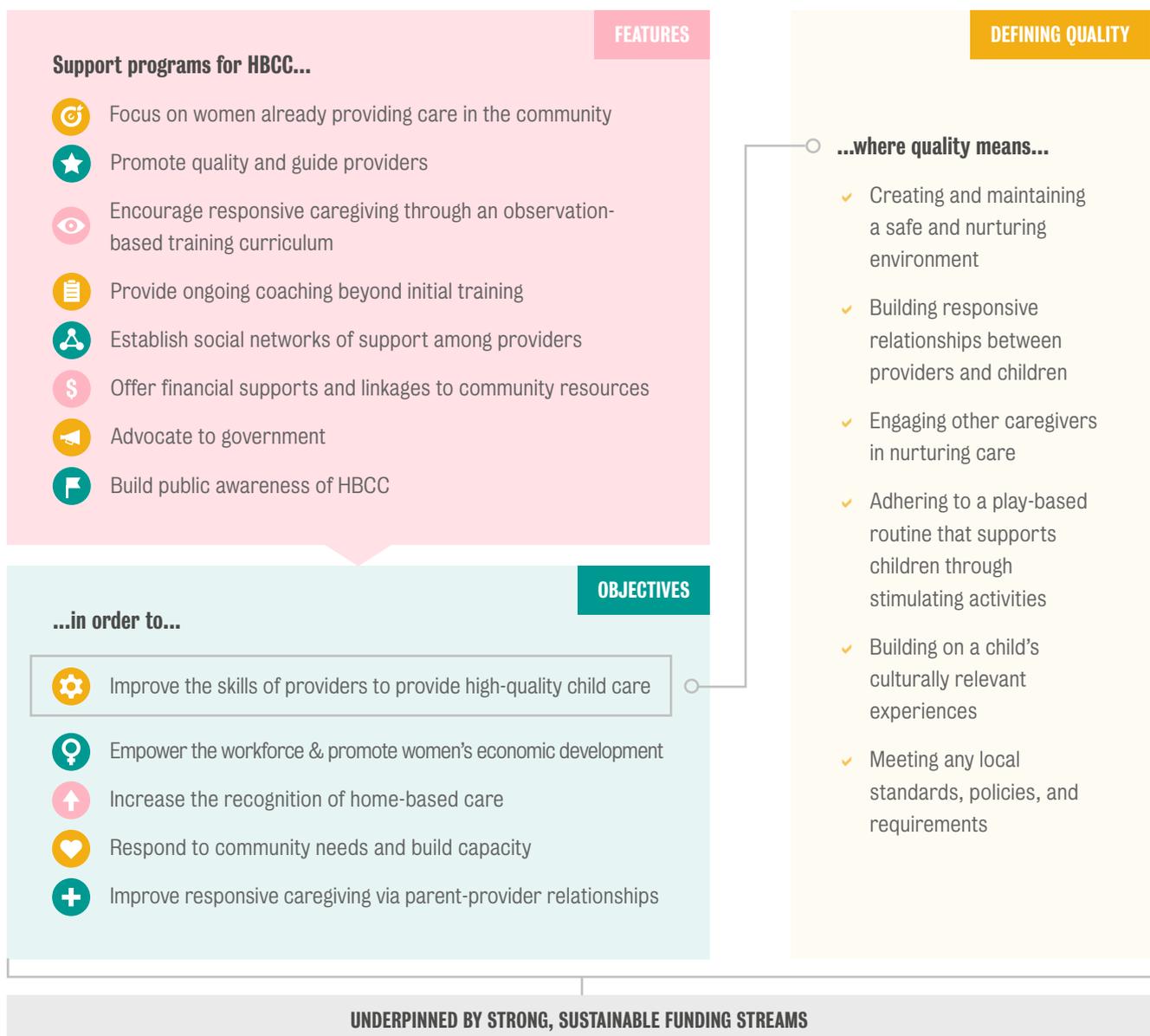


Figure 1: An emerging conceptual model for support programs for HBCC

While the programs we studied all contributed to improved quality of care, there were common challenges to achieving this goal, including:

- The need for financial support and sustainability
- The balance between promoting quality and assuring income
- The difficulty in reaching home-based providers
- The process of gaining parental recognition and buy-in
- The demand to improve quality outpacing supply
- The lack of political will
- The challenge of collecting evidence of impact

While producing this report, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, affecting all the support programs that we spoke to. Although COVID-19 raised new problems for the HBCC industry, it also served to bring into focus persistent and structural vulnerabilities within the sector, from a need to provide more robust financial safety nets to providers with precarious livelihoods, to a need to universalize available support to reach all providers who need it. In the conversations we had, there was an overwhelming desire to reimagine the HBCC sector, taking measures beyond immediate crisis response to tackle structural and persistent issues. Furthermore, there is overwhelming agreement that a strong, resilient child care sector is critical for economies to get back up and running.

In order to realize the success of these support programs, scale their impact further, and insulate the sector against further crises, we make the following five major recommendations:

- 1 Donors and policymakers should increase financing for systems of support, and governments should provide more funding to home-based child care providers
- 2 Policymakers should look to embed support programs into the public sector to increase scale and sustainability
- 3 The early childhood care and education sector should establish a global learning community of existing support programs for HBCC
- 4 The early childhood care and education sector should convene a panel of experts to develop guidance that can address standards, competencies, and tools to define and measure quality for HBCC across a range of diverse settings
- 5 Further research should be undertaken to answer outstanding questions not resolved in this report

Spring Impact and Echidna Giving invite further discussion on the above findings and recommendations, and potential implications for supporting HBCC providers and the families that depend on their vital services. We hope that this report is seen as an initial step towards understanding and scaling the impact of support programs and initiatives for HBCC, and we invite you to join the conversation on how to bring quality child care to even more families and children worldwide.