BUSINESS CASE FOR EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED CHILDCARE

Lessons from the tea sector in Rwanda and recommendations for scale and sustainability

October 2021
Acknowledgements

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October 2021
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<td>AKDN</td>
<td>Aga Khan Development Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPEX</td>
<td>Capital expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-based organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID</td>
<td>Corona virus disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRBP</td>
<td>Children’s Rights and Business Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate social responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUR</td>
<td>Euro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FKL</td>
<td>Frigoken Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBP</td>
<td>Great British Pound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross domestic product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GL-BT</td>
<td>Green leaf to black tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMSAR</td>
<td>Improving Market Systems for Agriculture in Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIGEPROF</td>
<td>Ministry for Gender and Family Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINECOFIN</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Metric tonne</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAEB</td>
<td>National Agricultural Export Development Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>National Commission of Children</td>
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<td>NCDA</td>
<td>National Childcare Development Agency</td>
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<td>OPEX</td>
<td>Operational expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QC</td>
<td>Quality control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Rainforest Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>RMT</td>
<td>Rwanda Mountain Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROI</td>
<td>Return on investment</td>
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<tr>
<td>RWF</td>
<td>Rwandan Franc</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>USD</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The critical role childcare plays in unlocking women’s productivity, children’s potential and national development has garnered increasing cross-sector attention in recent years. For the private sector, childcare becomes a business concern where its absence inhibits mothers from dedicating their hours to work in a full, consistent and reliable way. For industries like tea, where the majority of critical agricultural pluckers are female, providing childcare services to workers goes far beyond a corporate social responsibility optics endeavour, to making a seminal difference in a company’s bottom line. As described by one tea manager “Without pluckers, there is no productivity. Without productivity, there is no product. Without product, there is no profit.” The majority of pluckers are women aged 45 and under, who are or will most likely become mothers, assume primary responsibility for childcaring and have to craft arrangements that reconcile their childcare duties with those of the workplace. Ensuring that these arrangements allow space to dedicate sufficient time to plucking tea in the field is of paramount importance to tea company managers, in a sector where margins are slim, volumes are key, and labour shortage in rural areas is an increasingly serious business concern. These very palpable business drivers have prompted an increasing number of tea companies to set up childcare facilities over the last few years for company employees to use. This initiative has garnered the support of UNICEF and NAEB and grown in profile and scope.

The purpose of this study has been to assess how effective the tea sector’s experience of setting up in-house childcare facilities has been in meeting parents’ need for trusted, reliable, quality childcare services that can help mothers focus on work. The key question has been whether by providing these services companies have benefited from a boost in employee productivity, and if it is possible to prove the business case for the tea sector to invest in childcare. If so, this could encourage agribusinesses beyond tea to follow the sector’s lead. Specifically, the three goals were to (1) map the tea sector’s childcare experience, (2) assess the business case for childcare, and (3) propose solutions to reach scale.

The assignment began in November 2020, with field work continuing until March 2021. Interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders, with a primary focus on tea company managers and parents using or needing childcare services, but also encompassing other entities such as NCDA, NAEB, UNICEF, WFP and others with an interest in the outcome of this initiative. Interviews also took place with companies in the horticulture and flower industries to explore the opportunity for replicating the tea model in other agribusiness sectors, as well as with buyers of products from Europe.

The summary conclusions are that the business case for investing in childcare is clearly borne out by the quantitative data, showing a marked increase in productivity of workers who have access to employer-supported childcare (in quantum of tea plucked per day, as a result of longer days spent plucking tea, vs actual days spent in the field). The qualitative data also underlined the fact that worker loyalty and hence retention improved when companies provided childcare. The findings show, however, clear scope for improving the model and childcare service rendered. Areas of improvement include advance planning, greater user consultation and user mapping, more investment and attention to the management and operations of childcare facilities (not just their construction), greater recognition of workers’ willingness to pay if services could be improved, and more attention to partnerships that could share the operations and cost burden of setting up childcare facilities – for tea companies and cooperatives alike – while also enhancing quality of service.

The summary recommendations of the study are that in order to improve prospects for scaling this very promising model and initiative provided by the tea sector, (1) investment in improved planning be made to create a comprehensive blueprint that can guide employer-supported childcare planning, (2) this blueprint be tested across tea and non-tea sectors, in urban and rural areas, and (3) opportunities for partnerships, coordination and growth be explored intentionally in order to maximise impact of this initiative and prospects for scale. As a prerequisite to achieving these objectives, a coordinating body as well as funding will need to be secured.
01 BACKGROUND TO THE ASSIGNMENT
INTRODUCTION
TO THE ASSIGNMENT

The study evaluated employer-supported childcare initiatives rolled out in Rwanda to demonstrate how these improve productivity and the bottom line, and to provide recommendations to encourage further investment and greater returns at scale.

UNICEF in partnership with NAEB and the UK Aid programme IMSAR, implemented by Palladium, have been working to develop a business case to encourage the agricultural sector in Rwanda to invest in employer-supported childcare. The assumption has been that given the sector’s heavy reliance on a female workforce, making childcare services available to women with young children will improve productivity and worker loyalty alike. The objective of this assignment has been to evaluate employer-supported childcare initiatives that have been rolled out to date, to learn from them and to build evidence of the business and social returns that investing in employer-centred childcare can generate. In addition, where this evaluation has shown areas where current approaches could be improved, the assignment also aims to provide recommendations and guidance on how investment and operations can be structured to enhance this nascent, corporate-backed initiative, so that it can be scaled and adopted industry- and country-wide.

The assignment included:

1. Mapping the employer-supported childcare tea sector experience. Which tea companies are already investing in employer-supported childcare service provision and what has been their experience to date?

2. Assessing the business case. Determining whether there is a business case for employer-supported childcare, based on the experience of the tea sector?

3. Looking ahead. If the business case for employer-supported childcare is proven, how can this model be scaled?

While the focus has been on employer-supported childcare in the tea industry, the findings demonstrate that investing in such a facility is likely to boost productivity of working mothers across most of Rwanda’s agricultural sectors.

Data used in creating this business case drew on both primary and secondary sources, with the former including key informant interviews with managers of tea farms, interviews with key employer-supported childcare stakeholders, FGDs with users and prospective users of employer-supported childcare facilities, and quantitative data on worker productivity – the latter drawing on literature review relevant to Rwanda and employer-supported childcare as a business investment.

This report’s explicit focus and analysis on proving the business case for investing in employer-supported childcare facilities should serve as a useful prompt to encourage private sector companies to rethink the drivers and impacts of these investments from a bottom-line perspective. When they do, and if and when the workforce responds, private sector and community childcare examples can serve to encourage the public sector to proactively engage in supporting systemic solutions to Rwanda’s childcare crisis. Where a model built on private sector investment and sustained by a combination of user- and corporate-backed funding can be shown to alleviate the untenable financial burden on the public sector of financing universal preschool care, governments’ will be motivated to assist such efforts. Governments can focus on creating conditions and enabling environment incentives to encourage private sector investment in employer-supported childcare for the national workforce, and support community-based childcare initiatives where self-employment prevails, creating a win-win for government, the private sector and communities alike.
GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDCARE

Why early childhood development and childcare are of paramount economic importance, and why the private sector should ‘care’.

Over the past decade, Early Childhood Development (ECD) has garnered increased attention from the scientific community, international health and development institutions and governments, as appreciation of how critical early years are in shaping an individual’s future formation and productivity, deepens.

Studies show that between the ages of 0 to 3 years, the human brain forms new connections at an astounding rate – according to Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child, more than one million every second, a pace never repeated in life again. By age 5, 90% of the brain is fully formed, before many children have ever set foot in formal school. Thus, undernutrition as well as poor care and/or trauma have long-term implications for the health and development of children as they become adults. Indeed, a poor start in life limits children’s ability to benefit from education, leading to lower productivity and social tensions in the long term. Conversely, for a child in a low- or middle-income country, quality early development can boost their income by a full 25%, the equivalent of moving up an entire social class. For those unable to access quality childcare, lower earnings as an adult lead to increasing inequalities. Socio-economic consequences related to ECD therefore add to the multiple challenges faced by low- to middle-income countries and hinder long-term growth prospects. Despite the recognised importance of ECD, data reveals that 250 million children aged 0 to 5 years in low-income and middle-income countries are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential. If children are not supported in these critical formative years, they are unlikely to become fully productive adults. As such, the importance of ECD, “an integrated concept that cuts across multiple sectors – including health and nutrition, education, and social protection – and refers to the physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional development of young children (from birth to age 8)” defines not just the development of a child but also of a nation and has come to occupy an increasingly prominent place in global development discourse. In fact, ECD was included in the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015.

Beyond its impact on children, childcare has become a key focus for those concerned with gender economic inequality. With the burden of childcare falling most heavily on the shoulders of mothers, caring for the next generation tends to curtail their earning potential in the five to six years before a child can enter formal full-time schooling. A woman’s career thus encounters a prolonged period of disruption and limited engagement in the workforce, putting her on a lower earning echelon than her male peers. Similarly, women who have children versus those who do not become mothers experience vastly different earnings trajectories. A study of women’s work conducted by Bhaktal in 2014 in Kenya, Liberia and Senegal showed that 91% of women in Liberia, 82% in Kenya and 72% in Senegal had had to forego earning opportunities in order to meet their family obligations. These constraints seem to be more pressing in rural areas.

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1. Early Childhood Development refers to the physical, cognitive, linguistic and socio-emotional development of young children (UNESCO). This report takes cognisance of this concept, which underpins its research and analysis – and ultimately its recommendations for the setting-up of the employer-supported childcare services it proposes.

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It is clear that with the burden of childcare residing primarily with the primary caregiver, securing accessible, adequate childcare is key to unlocking the economic potential of mothers, the development potential of children, and by extension the country itself, by contributing to a nation’s GDP. Investing in early childhood development should be central to all governments development policies and private sector strategies. To quote James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics:

“Early childhood development is a smart investment. The earlier the investment, the greater the return.”

Heckman’s work compares the return on investment of investing in early childhood care against other levels of education, and has found that return decreases with the age of the targeted beneficiaries – in other words, the younger the child, the higher the return from investment (Fig.2).
According to Heckman, for every USD 1 spent on early childhood development, the return on investment can yield anything from USD 7–16\textsuperscript{13}. Employer-supported childcare is therefore a cost-effective way to boost shared prosperity, promote inclusive growth and expend equal opportunity. Similarly, there are significant benefits to the private sector from investing in employer-supported facilities\textsuperscript{14}, including:

**Recruitment**
Given that childcare in Rwanda is primarily a mother’s responsibility, the business case for childcare is naturally strongest for companies looking to recruit women.

**Attendance and retention**
The availability of childcare gives employees confidence that their children are at a safe place, incentivising them to work longer hours, while reducing the rate of staff turnover. Employers can therefore enjoy savings on new employee training and recruitment costs.

**Productivity gains**
Parents, particularly women, are forced to be absent for work at short notice when their ad hoc childcare arrangements fall through. With employer-supported childcare, absences, are reduced and employees feel more at ease at work which increases their focus and brings higher productivity for companies.

**Workforce diversity**
Childcare gives mothers and women greater prospects to participate in the workplace and advance their careers, rather than continuously making trade-offs between their earnings/careers and obligations as mothers. For companies, this workforce diversity is a stabilising factor in the work culture, while also helping position themselves as gender equality champions.

**Corporate social responsibility and enhanced reputational branding benefits**
Companies that offer childcare are recognised as ‘good employers’ among the communities they operate in. This can also enhance their reputation among consumers, investors, buyers and other stakeholders, creating opportunities for growth.

**Compliance**
In some countries, childcare provision is required by national legislation for companies to be able to operate. Being compliant can also help companies access new markets, buyers and investment.

**Community relations**
Companies which invest in childcare contribute to local economic development and are valued by the workforce, improving their community and public relations.

Despite all these proven benefits, government investment in early childhood development in low- and middle-income countries remains low. For example, in 27 sub-Saharan African countries, only 0.01% of gross national product was spent on pre-primary education in 2012\textsuperscript{15}. According to World Bank only 2% of Africa’s education budget goes towards early years education. Rolling out publicly financed, comprehensive childcare initiatives for all children from low-income families across Africa would cost billions of dollars annually, and while this investment potentially would create much larger budget savings over time, immediate cash flows, competing priorities and pressure to invest in tangible development initiatives have presented strong deterrents to countries deploying resources for pre-school childcare. Similarly, while lack of access to childcare hurts businesses, private sector investment into employer-supported childcare is extremely limited and sub-optimal. Unfortunately, employers often fail to appreciate the business case for investments in childcare or look at it from a compliance or corporate social responsibility perspective. Even when companies are convinced of the business case, they have difficulties in applying workable models. Nevertheless, examples and lessons from employer-supported childcare, do exist and can be harnessed to stimulate greater investment, as will now be examined.

\textsuperscript{14} IFC (2017). “Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare”
\textsuperscript{15} UNICEF.
1.3 Examples of and Lessons from Employer-Supported Childcare

Case studies from national and international models of childcare support informed this analysis, which brings together factors needed to ensure sustainable solutions to Rwanda’s childcare crisis.

1.3.1 Overview of employer-supported childcare models

This section presents a selection of employer-supported childcare models drawn from the region and lessons which are relevant to the Rwandan context and tea sector in particular, which have informed the subsequent analysis of the tea sector model in Rwanda. These are presented in Table 1, followed by case studies covering the childcare systems most relevant to this analysis, namely corporate sponsored, hybrid and community-based models. While the majority of the practical models reviewed for this study fall under the first column of in-house provision (with some instances of hybrid childcare, particularly in the case of cooperatives), there remains an opportunity to explore further models in the Rwandan context, particularly local market-based and government childcare centre partnerships. This will ensure full coverage of service.

### Table 1 - Examples of and Lessons from Employer-Supported Childcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Corporate (in-house) provision</th>
<th>Corporate / hybrid (part in-house, part devolved)</th>
<th>Local entrepreneur / market-based urban</th>
<th>Local market-based / rural</th>
<th>Government childcare centres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Corporate sets up daycare / crèche facility in own premises / on work site</td>
<td>Corporate houses some employees’ children on premises, devolves overflow to local crèches</td>
<td>Corporate invests in local market / community / entrepreneur delivery of childcare services</td>
<td>Probably similar to urban, but potentially with more in-kind vs. cash payments</td>
<td>Corporate sponsors employer-supported childcare provision through government-run centres, helping upgrade quality of service and/or access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pros</td>
<td>Corporate CSR (employee retention, brand enhancement) QC control of care in-house</td>
<td>CSR benefits Aligned business story – compliance with new Rainforest Alliance and other certification bodies</td>
<td>CSR benefits No liability Sustainable Aligned business story – promotes local community entrepreneurship</td>
<td>CSR benefits No liability Sustainable Aligned business story – promotes local market / development</td>
<td>CSR benefits No liability Partnership and alignment with GOR ECD policy goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cons</td>
<td>Cost Space – sufficient to meet demand? Liability</td>
<td>Cost Liability How to pick who attends in-house vs devolved</td>
<td>QC may not meet corporate standards – need ringfenced responsibilities to avoid liability</td>
<td>QC and business sustainability</td>
<td>Cost Sustainability QC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>High. Upfront and sustained</td>
<td>Medium-high. Still upfront and sustained</td>
<td>Modest, though QC could be a concern without oversight</td>
<td>Modest, though QC could be a concern</td>
<td>Government budget-dependant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investing in what</td>
<td>Facilities, training, salaries, equipment and meals</td>
<td>Facilities, training, salaries, equipment and meals</td>
<td>Business training, soft loans</td>
<td>Business training, soft loans Subsidies to workers (e.g. voucher schemes)</td>
<td>Facilities, training, salaries, equipment and meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low medium</td>
<td>Medium-high</td>
<td>Medium, high depending on population density and catchment</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Afrifresh, South Africa; Safaricom Kenya, Red Lands Roses</td>
<td>Frigoken and Daraja model with Aga Khan, Nairobi</td>
<td>Tiny Totos</td>
<td>Malindi-Ramkani CBO, Mwingi – Home of Children</td>
<td>Isiolo County childcare centres, Kenya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Corporate in-house**

**Afrifresh** is a South African producer and exporter of fresh fruit. The company specialises in table grapes and citrus (grapefruits, oranges, soft citrus, and lemons), and has buyers in more than 50 countries. The company’s production capacity dramatically increased from 2016 to 2017, during which time it doubled its workforce, shifting emphasis primarily to unskilled labour. Women represent close to 50% of Afrifresh’s casual workforce. The company provides on-site accommodation to full-time workers and temporary accommodation to seasonal workers. While many female workers leave their children with grandparents, for those who have to bring them with them to the workplace, the company has set up five crèches for children aged up to five years old. Each crèche is registered with local authorities and has trained workers taking care of five to ten children each. Service is either free or accessible at a small fee, and parents cover the cost of food. Overall, workers express huge satisfaction with the service, particularly the impact it has in stabilising their working day and improving their children’s development.16

**Safaricom** is a telecommunications company and the largest company in Kenya. It operates two crèches on-site in Nairobi, offering free services for employees’ children between three months to seven years. Parents bring their own food, clothes, and diapers; Safaricom covers operating costs and contracts an external provider to operate them. Initially, Safaricom asked employees to pay for the services, but when they were underutilised it offered them for free of charge. This unlocked the company’s ability to attract worker demand, and reduced childcare-related absenteeism and workplace disruption. In 2016, the total annual cost of operating these childcare facilities was an estimated USD 33,300. The pricing structure accounts for the cost of space, staff, food, materials and overheads, and whether children attend full- or part-time.17

**Red Lands Roses** is a flower company established in 1996 in Ruiru, 35 km northeast of Nairobi. The company grows roses on 28 ha of land and manages over 20 greenhouses, and is internationally recognised for its green hydroponic horticulture methods and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Red Lands Roses built a daycare centre in 2003 with a EUR 200,00 grant from the German Development Bank, which accommodates 70 children from three months to three years old – all the children of Red Lands Roses employees. The centre, which operates 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, costs approximately £1,500 per month to run. The company also provides meals, access to health support and a doctor when needed, and washes both the babies and their clothes (they wear centre clothes every day). Users pay a very nominal fee of 10% of costs for use per day, mostly to denote commitment. Usage is limited by school holidays, social biases of office and field work staff, and by families with multiple young children, where other home-based childcare arrangements are preferred. There is certain demand for childcare for children between the ages of 3 and 6; however, this would require further investment for a separate facility, better adapted to the learning needs and development stages of that age group. With a user engagement strategy, centre use may be optimised but there are doubts about the future demand for the daycare centre as the company’s workforce is gradually growing older and work on the flower farm no longer attracts the younger generations.

**Corporate/hybrid**

**Frigoken Limited**, part of the industrial arm of the (FKL) Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), was established in 1989 and is one of the largest vertically integrated, export-oriented horticultural processors in East Africa, engaging thousands of small-scale farmers in its value chain. Frigoken’s vegetable processing facility employs 3,000 workers, 90% of whom are women. The facility is located in Nairobi’s industrial area, the poorest part of the city. Many of Frigoken’s employees are single women; few are able to afford help in the house house-helps . Given their reliance on women coming to work, Frigoken has established an on-site crèche facility for employees’ children between the age of six months and three years. Childcare at the centre includes the provision of nutritious meals, constant holistic care, and structured learning by trained staff with an emphasis on early childhood development. The centre liaises with parents to provide parental mentoring, and with local authorities to facilitate routine check-ups and other health-related matters. Parents pay 20% of the cost, and children secure a place on a first-come, first-serve basis. As a result of this programme, Frigoken has seen decreased employee absenteeism and churn, and increased employee retention, particularly after maternity leave. Parents pay 20% of the cost, and the administration follows a strict waitlist policy where children are provided with places in the crèche on a

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first-come, first-serve basis. Its success has resulted in increased demand from employees for the service, which cannot be met solely by the on-site facility. In response, Frigoken has partnered with the Aga Khan Foundation and community-based organisation Daraja Civic Initiatives Forum on the “Babycares Project”. This builds the capacity of local childcare centres to give Frigoken employees additional quality childcare options. This includes the provision of technical expertise on childcare and early childhood development, as well as material support to improve the facility’s environment.

This case study supports the idea that capacity and demand for on-site employer-supported childcare must be mapped out before launching such an initiative. For instance, if coverage is less than 100% of demand, jealousy and conflict can arise among those employees not given service access. At the same time, on-site centres can be expensive and may not be the right choice for all businesses wishing to support their employees’ childcare needs. Other options, including community enterprise partnerships, voucher systems, and investments in care facilities in the local community can also be considered.

**Local entrepreneur-based, Tiny Totos, Kenya**

Tiny Totos is a registered Kenyan social enterprise that works with existing childcare providers in the lower income neighbourhoods of Nairobi, transforming their standards of service and returns through training, technology, network and investment. Its model, which taps into existing market demand and supply, focuses on self-agency and avoids dependency, enabling low-standard, informal babysitters to become profitable, reliable childcare entrepreneurs. Rather than investing in setting up childcare centres, Tiny Totos provides informal, unregistered, struggling entrepreneurs with the support they need to make their businesses a success. Stable childcare access in turn enables women to focus on their work and improve their careers and income without struggling with the constant disruption that unstable childcare represents. Tiny Totos asks entrepreneurs to pay a modest monthly membership fee to denote commitment to the network and to uphold Tiny Totos standards of conduct (around childcare content, nutrition, facilities, data, business records and management), as well as complete transparency of client records from payment to attendance and physical access. The Tiny Totos business model also offers additional products and services beyond daycare to customers and managers in the network, either financed or through direct sale. Its objective is to provide both open source content support licensing of tech tools and digital content, and childcare advisory services to parties outside its network, including market research and socio-economic data services. This will further diversify the value derived from aggregating the fragmented childcare market. Tiny Totos aims to adapt and replicate its childcare facilitation services, online support and entrepreneur-based model to new partners and regional contexts beyond Kenya.
1.3.2
Lessons from employer-supported childcare

Drawing on regional and international examples of successful childcare solutions, this study identified several conditions that need meeting in order to achieve sustainable, impactful solutions to the childcare crisis. These factors informed this assessment of the business case in Rwanda, and include:

- A supportive enabling environment and adequate/accessible regulations to ensure minimum standards are known, monitored and enforced;

- Authentic consumer demand and user-focused design – childcare solutions must be crafted and adapted according to genuine user need rather than conceptualised in a vacuum;

- Childcare management skills and systems – those managing the centres need equipping with these;

- Partnerships – these are key to ensuring that standalone corporate and community-based childcare enterprises can diversify their revenues and be self-sufficient;

- Access to finance to cover the initial start-up costs of childcare centres, and continued access to finance to support improvements and additional services that a childcare centre might want to deploy to boost customer loyalty, relevance and financial resilience. Larger companies may have access to finance to set up childcare facilities but smaller enterprises may not. In such instances, clustering smaller companies in a shared work zone or park to collectively invest in childcare may be a sensible, cost-effective strategy to pursue. External financial support and partnerships may usefully be drawn on, to corral further resources, shared services or shared payment arrangements.

- Documentation and systemisation of practice – critical to scale any childcare model. The principles of cost and process efficiencies apply in the management of childcare centres as in any business. Replication depends on tight documentation of processes and their subsequent implementation to avoid loss of both economic and social momentum.
THE BUSINESS CASE FOR EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED CHILDCARE IN RWANDA

Evidence and lessons from the tea sector
2.1

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED CHILDCARE IN THE RWANDA TEA SECTOR

Based on qualitative and quantitative findings, investing in employer-supported childcare to remove the childcare barrier boosts female workforce productivity, and generates significant financial benefits to tea companies’ bottom line and a positive return on investment.

2.1.1

The Rwanda tea sector’s experience of employer-supported childcare

Tea is a leading export product of Rwanda, and the tea sector is one of the country’s largest employers, with tea grown in 11 out of 30 districts. Women aged between 18 and 35 make up 50% to 70% of the typical tea plantation plucking workforce. Lack of access to childcare means that mothers often bring their children to work in the tea plantation – either strapped to their backs or left to play in the plantations or surrounding woodland, posing risks to children’s health and safety and lowering mothers’ productivity by distracting them from their work. Recognising the risk to their children’s health by remaining in the fields so long, mothers struggle to dedicate themselves to an entire day’s work. Rather, they tend to curtail their hours - distracted by their children, whenever the weather changes worried about their health, or how they are doing if left in ad hoc care arrangements with relatives or neighbours back home. As a result, between 15% to 30% of working women reduce their working hours to cater for their preschool children, which inevitably impacts the overall tea sector productivity and the businesses’ bottom line. With competition rife within the tea industry, suboptimal company productivity due to a distracted and unreliable or uncommitted workforce represents a clear risk to company performance. As described by one tea manager, “Without pluckers, there is no productivity. Without productivity, there is no product. Without product, there is no profit”.

The tea sector’s experience in setting up formal employer-supported childcare dates back to 2013, when Rwanda Mountain Tea (RMT) Group first decided to set up a childcare facility in Mata in response to the call by production managers for a formal space where mothers could leave their children and focus on their work. Following its success, the RMT consortium developed additional centres, such as in Rutsiro and Nyabihu, with Sorwathe independently following suit. RMT and Sorwathe’s efforts to address their workers’ childcare constraint, in order to improve productivity and the overall wellbeing of the workers and their children, have been supported by their partner companies in Europe, with Taylors of Harrogate, a major buyer of Rwandan tea, providing capital support to both companies to help them meet the CAPEX costs of constructing childcare facilities for employees. The companies primarily meet running costs, with some parents contributing USD 1–2 a month for food costs.
In 2016, UNICEF became aware of this private sector initiative and launched a pilot partnership with Sorwathe aimed at improving conditions for children in the tea sector by facilitating access to quality childcare. This involved training caregivers to manage a mobile crèche and providing on-site childcare for working mothers. The initiative directly improved retention numbers as well as productivity, boosting the income of tea workers and returns to the company alike. As a result of this successful pilot, UNICEF decided to scale the technical support it offered to employer-supported childcare initiatives, by working to implement the Children’s Rights and Business Principles (CRBP), and by signing a non-financial partnership in 2018 with NAEB, made up of 19 tea companies and 20 tea farmer cooperatives. The partnership began with training parents in best childcare practices, and progressed to focusing on improving workers’ conditions, with a particular emphasis on conditions for female employees with young children. Childcare emerged as a key focus in this regard. For all tea companies that have invested in employer-supported childcare, the partnership has provided follow-up coaching, mentorship and supervision. UNICEF hired a consultant in 2019 to provide technical oversight for this component of the partnership, who worked until the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020. Apart from technical assistance, UNICEF has also provided tents and toys to companies with childcare facilities, and advocated policy linkages with local government and National Childcare Development Agency (NCDA) focal point people at the district level.

At the national leadership retreat held in February 2020, H.E. President Kagame acknowledged the investment made in employer-supported childcare by the tea sector. At the tea stakeholders meeting in June 2020 he went further, recommending that all tea factories and cooperatives which had not yet completed construction of a childcare centre establish at least one facility by the end of the year. Currently, 16 out of 19 (over 70%) tea factories have childcare facilities (Fig. 3). At the same time, 10 out of 19 (over 52%) tea sector cooperatives have established or are establishing childcare facilities.

Figure 3

Tea sector progress towards establishing Employer-supported Childcare facilities

Green indicates tea companies which already provide employer-supported childcare.
The COVID-19 pandemic slowed down the process of employer-supported childcare adoption, with most childcare facilities closed for most of 2020. In 2021 however, with the economy opening back up, the time is ripe for a new injection of energy, direction and partnership. At the national level, new opportunities to collaborate with NCDA exist, providing the potential of technical and political support for employer-supported childcare in the tea sector, as well as broader sector scaling. This review of the tea sector employer-supported childcare initiative has therefore come at an apposite time for reflection and renewal. The following sections summarise the study’s key quantitative and qualitative findings, focusing on:

- Benefits accrued by companies and employees as a result of investing in employer-supported childcare; and
- Constraints to employer-supported childcare provision and opportunities for it to become sustainable at scale.

### 2.1.2 Quantitative findings

This section provides a deeper analysis of the capital expenditures (building and set-up costs – also known as CAPEX costs) and operating costs (such as salaries and materials – also known as OPEX costs) of the current UNICEF-supported model, as well as returns from the increased productivity of workers attending the facilities. The findings of the cost-benefit analysis suggest a clear business case for investing in employer-supported childcare facilities. Their availability leads to improved business performance and, over time, to a positive return on investment. Worker incomes also increase (primarily due to workers having more hours in a day to dedicate to plucking, rather than working more days each month).

#### Costs

The study collected expenditure data associated with the construction and operation of employer-supported childcare facilities from five factories – Sorwathe, Gisovu (which provided projected CAPEX figures), Mata, Rutsiro, and Nyabihu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAPEX</th>
<th>OPEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction of the facility</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wages</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Procurement of equipment (e.g. beds, mattresses)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equipment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Materials (e.g. stationery)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other recurrent costs (e.g. utilities, maintenance)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Other recurrent costs (e.g. utilities, maintenance)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on this structure, Table 2 presents a summary of the costs incurred by the factories (standardised to the capacity/attendance of employer-supported childcare centres) and the assumptions made for the CBA. These assumptions have been kept conservative to ensure that financial viability is not over-estimated.

| Expenditure associated with employer-supported childcare centres (in USD) |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| **CAPEX Minimum**               | **Maximum**   | **Assumed**   |
| Construction costs              | 18,600        | 51,000        | 35,000         |
| Equipment                        | 17,700        | 45,500        | 30,000         |
| **OPEX (per annum)**            | **Minimum**   | **Maximum**   | **Assumed**   |
| Staff salaries                  | 3,000         | 6,700         | 5,000          |
| Food (for 50 children)          | 1,000         | 3,000         | 2,500          |
| Materials (e.g. stationery)     | 15            | 80            | 50             |
| Misc. (e.g. utilities, maintenance) | 670         | 1,520         | 1,000          |

Note: values are estimated based on an exchange rate (USD:RWF) of 1:985.

19. The cost-benefit analysis assumes an employer-supported childcare facility capacity of 50 children; expenditure data collected from each factory was thus standardised for comparability. For instance, if a factory reported monthly food expenditure of USD 2,400 for attendance of 40 children, a value of USD 3,000 was estimated for 50 children.
Benefits
Based on data availability, the study has identified two benefits of employer-supported childcare as being quantifiable for most factories: productivity (volume of tea plucked) and attendance (number of days worked). To estimate the impact of employer-supported childcare facilities on productivity and attendance, each tea factory provided productivity and attendance data for 80 workers during the period 2017–2020, covering:

- 40 workers with children who used the childcare facilities\(^{20}\); and
- 40 workers with children of similar age who did not use the childcare facilities.

Additional information detailing the methodology used to collect and analyse the data is presented in Annex 6. Table 3 and Table 4 present descriptive statistics based on data we obtained from Mata Tea Factory and Rutsiro Tea Factory\(^ {21}\). Some of the key insights are:

- Somewhat surprisingly, employees who place their child in employer-supported childcare have lower attendance rates than those who do not. The difference in Mata is less than a day; in Rutsiro the difference is 2.5 days. This is largely because mothers have chosen to work longer hours per day and reduce the number of days they go in.

- Workers who use employer-supported childcare display higher productivity levels than those who do not, which means they work longer hours and/or pluck faster. On average, each worker plucks almost four additional kilograms of tea per day at Mata and more than six kilograms extra per day at Rutsiro.

- The increase in productivity more than compensates for the lower attendance rate. On average, the volumes plucked over a month by each childcare user is 32 kilograms higher in Mata and 81 kilograms higher in Rutsiro.

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Childcare Users</th>
<th>Non-Childcare Users</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average attendance per worker (# of days worked/month)</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average daily productivity per worker (in kg)</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly volumes plucked per worker (in kg)</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Childcare Users</th>
<th>Non-Childcare Users</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average attendance per worker (# of days worked/month)</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average daily productivity per worker (in kg)</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average monthly volumes plucked per worker (in kg)</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- In terms of income of employer-supported childcare users, this productivity growth translates to an increase of their monthly income by RWF 1,280 at Mata, and by RWF 3,645 at Rutsiro tea factory (assuming a price of RWF 40/kg at Mata and RWF 45/kg at Rutsiro). Higher income uplift is expected for workers supplying factories that offer higher prices (such as Gisovu Factory at RWF 55–70/kg).

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\(^{20}\) For a margin of error of 5% and a confidence interval of 90%, the required sample size for a population of 45 individuals is 39. The population size is based on the average capacity of a childcare facility, although it is actually lower due to the fact that some workers have more than one child using it. The confidence interval thus may be closer to 95%.

\(^{21}\) Data from Mata Factory ranges from January 2017 to February 2020, and data from Rutsiro Factory ranges from January 2019 to February 2020.
• In terms of improved factory performance, the introduction of employer-supported childcare facilities allowed Mata and Rutsiro to collect additional volume of green leaves – respectively 15.36 MT$^{22}$ and 53.46 MT$^{23}$ in 2019. Based on the factories’ green leaf to black tea (GL-BT) ratios$^{24}$, these volumes represent an additional black tea production of 3.66 MT for Mata and 13.36 MT for Rutsiro. Using Mata’s black tea average sale price for 2019 (USD 2.55/kg), this means that the employer-supported childcare facilities contributed to increasing Mata and Rutsiro’s revenues respectively by USD 9,326 and USD 34,081 in 2019. Thus, for each worker using the facilities, Mata and Rutsiro’s revenues increased respectively by USD 233.15 and USD 619.65 in 2019.

While these results are encouraging, this analysis is based on descriptive statistics and should be interpreted with caution. Statistical modelling was undertaken to control for other characteristics (see Annex 6) using data from five factories: Mata, Rutsiro, and three other factories in Nyabihu – Cyamabuye, Mutaho, and Rutuku.

The regressions suggest that providing employer-supported childcare facilities results in:

• Increased monthly volumes plucked per worker by an average of 80.85 kg (significant at the 5% level);
• No impact on attendance (workers might even work fewer days, though more studies are needed); and
• A positive impact on daily productivity, with childcare users’ daily volumes plucked per worker higher by 3.68 kg (significant at the 5% level).

These figures represent the average impact over the first twelve months of accessing employer-supported childcare. Figure 4 and Figure 5 illustrate this impact - estimates in bold and light blue represent a significance level of 5% and 10% respectively.

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Figure 4

Impact of employer-supported childcare use on production (kg/month)

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Figure 5

Impact of employer-supported childcare use on productivity (kg/day)

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22. Based on a recorded number of 40 women using Mata’s employer-supported childcare services in 2019.
23. Based on a recorded number of 55 women using Rutsiro’s employer-supported childcare services in 2019.
24. Mata Factory reported a GL-BT ratio of 4.2, while Rutsiro factory reported a GL-BT ratio of 4.
Using the estimated impact of employer-supported childcare on monthly production (80.85 kg extra per worker), the cost-benefit analysis (Annex 2) presents the breakeven points under a five-year horizon for six simulated scenarios based on a combination of 50% donor-funded CAPEX and the number of years necessary to reach full capacity. The typology of these scenarios and associated ROIs from the CBA are presented in Table 5 and Fig 6. The first three scenarios do not include donor funding, and differ based on the number of years necessary to reach full capacity:

- The Slow scenario refers to an annual growth of 8 children attending the childcare facility, which means 40 children will be attending after five years.
- The Standard scenario refers to an annual growth of 10 children attending the childcare facility, which means that 50 children (full capacity) will be attending after five years.
- The Fast scenario refers to an annual growth of 20 children attending the employer-supported childcare centre, which means that will reach full capacity after 2.5 years.
- The last three scenarios assume access to donor-funded funding for 50% of the initial investment (CAPEX), and similarly differ depending on the time it takes to reach full capacity.

### Table 5

**Typology of CBA scenarios**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Years-to-full capacity</th>
<th>Indicative years-to-break even</th>
<th>5-year ROI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Slow – no donor funding</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Standard – no donor funding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 to 5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Fast – no donor funding</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3 to 4</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Slow – donor-funded</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4 to 5</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Standard – donor-funded</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 to 4</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fast – donor-funded</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Here, the donor can be corporate, philanthropic/development, government or others putting in non-returnable cash.*
Employer-supported childcare break-even points under a five-year horizon for six scenarios
Quantitative conclusions

The data suggests that breakeven point will be achieved by following the model derived from increased yield from worker productivity, although the timing of this depends on how fast high level of occupancy within the employer-supported childcare facility is achieved. Note that the study’s focus was on data from tea companies, not from cooperatives – and while the benefits are expected to be the same, the ability of cooperatives to invest in CAPEX is likely to be less.

The model suggests that even without donor subsidy, and factoring in time to achieve a high level of occupancy within the employer-supported childcare centre, a healthy return on investment of 20.71% can be achieved within five years (Scenario 2).

However, if tea companies are able to form effective partnerships with their buyers, sharing CAPEX costs and accelerating the speed at which childcare occupancy is achieved, then breakeven can be achieved by the end of the second year and 100% return on investment achieved within five years.

Should the model pivot to include greater investment from parents in the costs of establishing and running the facilities, and become more effective in providing geographically and socially tailored coverage, this will accelerate breakeven and enhance prospects for scale.

What strengthens the case further is that the cost-benefit analysis returns speak to operations alone – and do not account for the additional returns from (1) improved reputation, leading to (2) more reliable buyers, and (3) accreditation resulting in (4) higher prices for the product and (5) a Fair Trade premium that could help meet the running costs of the childcare and bring breakeven point forward considerably. Those factors, added to the analysis, improve the business case further and are reviewed in greater detail in the recommendations section.

2.1.3 Qualitative findings

Overall, the feedback gathered through early engagement with key stakeholders, including tea factory staff, and management and workers using the employer-supported childcare facilities, suggests that childcare provision improves workers’ ability to dedicate time to plucking and therefore increases their productivity.

• Perspectives among the tea companies surveyed largely broke down into those who invest in childcare primarily on corporate social responsibility grounds – because “it is the right thing to do” – and those who recognise that childcare provision is good for business and delivers a return on investment. These perspectives drove different levels of data collection and analysis.

RMT for example had already identified business benefits in terms of both quantifiable improvements in productivity and from improved worker loyalty and retention, and collected data on worker attendance and productivity (although some adjustments may be needed to their data collection and analytics to inform the business case). While Sorwathe’s management seemed to focus on its social obligation to invest in childcare, it also shared RMT’s perspective that its workers were more focused, satisfied and settled because of the company’s childcare provision. To scale this model faster, this study provides evidence of the productivity value and returns to companies from investing in employer-supported childcare, proving a clear market opportunity and need.

• Beyond productivity gains, companies may be benefiting from improved reputation, certification opportunities and price premiums.

All farms sold to common buyers in the UK, notably Taylor’s of Harrogate. Both RMT and Sorwathe received funding from Taylor’s to set up employer-supported childcare centres. This pointed to an additional strong business case for setting up ECD centres, in terms of improved reputation, closer buyer relationships, and the opportunity for buyer subsidy of the initiatives. Although employer-supported childcare is not a requirement of either Fair Trade or Rainforest Alliance certification schemes, it is likely to feature in the latter’s new certification scheme in the near future. Regardless, the provision of employer-supported childcare services has helped strengthen much-needed supplier relationships and prospects for higher tea prices – of critical value, against a backdrop of broader market volatility. The value of standards and certification...
was affirmed through conversation with Taylor’s, who do not buy tea from any supplier lacking them. If the CAPEX for childcare facilities could be met by these suppliers, and the OPEX by the added premium of certified tea, the facilities might be able to largely cover their own costs even without additional worker productivity (that said, premium prices are not always welcomed by workers, as discussed below). This possibility should be further explored, together with the potential to attract CSR funding from the international buyers more systemically. Conversations with Control Union, a Rwanda-based certification provider led to similar findings – certifications such as 4C and SMETA, among others, while not specific to employer supported childcare, do cover aspects related to it.

- **Workers reported a range of benefits from employer-supported childcare, both to productivity and to children’s wellbeing**

  - Assured childcare. Mothers described a complex and uncertain juggling act in crafting ad hoc childcare arrangements before the provision of company-supported childcare. Their options ranged from taking children with them to work (resulting in shorter working hours and exposing children to hazards\(^\text{26}\)), leaving children with neighbours/local village childcare providers, often in poor conditions/unstable arrangements, taking older girls out of school to look after young siblings, or not working at all.

  - Productivity increase. Mothers reported significant increases in their ability of plucking tea, anywhere from a base rate of 15–30 kg/day up to 30–70 kg/day when they can access employer-supported childcare. Parents at Nyabihu Tea Company spoke of at least 10 women who had joined the company simply because of the childcare benefits it provided.

  - Improved child health. Mothers spoke of the children’s improved health resulting from the cleanliness of the childcare facilities, and access to freshly cooked food and a balanced diet which reduced malnutrition. Health monitoring by local authorities at the employer-supported childcare facility supported parents to anticipate health issues before they became severe. Sorwathe parents also reported the benefits of receiving direct feedback on their children’s health from health workers conducting health assessments at the childcare centre (although they requested that assessments and feedback be more systematic).

  - Improved child learning and positive impact on other children in the family. Parents from Sorwathe to Nyabihu spoke of how the children attending the childcare facility were more ‘advanced’ than other children in the locality, and performed better on starting primary school. Quality childcare also reduced/eliminated activity that prevented other children in the family from focusing on their own education, such as older girls having to forego school to babysit their siblings.

- **Workers reported a strong willingness to pay for/contribute towards employer-supported childcare facilities**

  - Parents across the employer-supported childcare facilities showed willingness to pay, ranging from RWF 1,000–5,000 (USD 1–5) per month (actually payment was USD 1–2 per month).

  - Parents overwhelmingly preferred to pay either in cash or through deductions from salary, rather than contributing time to managing the childcare facilities or bringing food. Sorwathe Tea Company management described how they had begun with a contribution model that simply created confusion, disparity and jealousy (among children with inferior food), while being time-consuming for mothers (to prepare the food) and making them late for work. They decided to switch to a payment model of RWF 1,000 (USD 1) per month, increased to RWF 2,000 in 2019. The only labour parents were prepared to invest was from men to build the centres.

  - The largest contribution parents were willing to make was, interestingly, cited by Gisovu parents who had yet to benefit from employer-supported childcare. This could be attributed to (1) they earned more than other farms so were able to spend more on additional services, and (2) without having experienced the service for free, they did not expect it to come without cost. This underlines the opportunity for companies to build in a contribution component from the outset. For those farms benefiting from employer-supported childcare, parents expressed willingness to pay more if services were improved (including better teachers, segmentation between children, teaching in English and uniforms).

\(^\text{26}\) These included drowning, encountering poisonous snakes and exposure to the elements. The latter caused children to fall sick twice a month, which fell to once every three months when childcare support was provided.
• The assessment also identified risks or aspects of the service needing improvement, to ensure (1) children’s safety and best possible development outcomes, and (2) returns from investment:

### Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas for improvements</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children were not grouped to ensure age-appropriate learning</td>
<td>Parents pointed out the difficulty of managing and supporting children effectively when all ages are managed together. As parents rightly stated, children below and above three need different learning environments, which not all employer-supported childcare is set up to provide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor ratio children/carers; untrained carers</td>
<td>Parents at Sorwathe noted that their facilities had started with 30 children and 2 carers, expanded to 60 with still only 2 carers, and now had 90 signed up for spaces once childcare reopened after COVID. This ratio was clearly not conducive to quality childcare. Parents expressed a desire for more experienced carers too, and a willingness to pay extra if needed for these.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient coverage (space and age)</td>
<td>With limited employer-supported childcare places available, few companies were able to provide 100% coverage to employees. Some facilities only catered to children up to age 3, leaving children aged 4–6 without adequate places to go to until primary school began. Many parents expressed concern that their children regressed during these years, given the substandard options available, and asked that companies extend the service right up to school-going age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-optimal opening hours</td>
<td>Parents at Nyabihu said the 7:30 a.m. start time of employer-supported childcare was too late and needed to be 6:00 a.m. Optimum opening hours seemed to be 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-optimal location</td>
<td>Some facilities were too physically distant from where parents lived. Rutsiro and Gisovu were asking for transport to be able to reach them in time. Ensuring that the location of childcare facilities is well spread out to cater to workers’ travel routes would improve adoption and impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-optimal coordination with health authorities</td>
<td>Parents welcomed the involvement of local health authorities in monitoring the health of children attending the centres, providing vaccinations in situ, and sometimes donating milk. However, this service was ad hoc, with copies of health data not available at the facilities. Opportunities for more effective engagement are being missed, and should be built with NCDA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor quality and standards</td>
<td>One FGD revealed the use of corporal punishment by staff at an employer-supported childcare facility, speaking to the need for better childcare sensitisation and monitoring of performance at company centres, and the need to go beyond just providing space. Again, improved standards represents an opportunity to engage with NCDA to integrate regular monitoring at employer-supported childcare centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of structured community engagement</td>
<td>Most company childcare centres were managed in a top-down manner, with minimal systematic parental engagement. This misses the opportunity for corolling community ownership and feedback on the centres, both of which can boost their sustainability. FGDs showed parents clearly had appetite for greater ownership, which companies should support and use to their advantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of regular feedback loops</td>
<td>Many FGDs revealed parents’ dissatisfaction with the fact that they were not given updates on plans and operations related to employer-supported childcare or the wellbeing of their children (unless a UNICEF delegation was visiting). Many were keen to receive updates on a regular basis and be able to voice their suggestions on how centres might be improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of service / additional support may be needed for coops to follow suit</td>
<td>Companies interviewed said many of their workers were part of cooperatives who similarly struggled with childcare issues standing in the way of worker productivity. Cooperatives interviewed expressed an interest in setting up childcare facilities of their own – some already had, with UK-buyer support – but also spoke of greater challenges than those faced by companies in meeting ongoing operational costs. Given that the amount of tea plucked by cooperatives sold to companies could vastly exceed that plucked by companies directly, tailoring the solution to the particular realities of cooperatives appeared critical.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Rwanda benefits from a strong enabling environment and policies that support employed-supported centre initiatives.

Rwanda’s government is committed to improving employer-supported childcare and has made childcare development a pillar of its national development policy. As noted in the document establishing the National Early Childhood Development Programme (NECDP), “Rwanda is very committed to human capital development and investing in early years significantly contributes to the critical pathway of attaining a middle-income status embedded in a vibrant knowledge-based economy”\(^{27}\).
To improve employer-supported childcare opportunities, in 2016 the Government revised its National Early Childhood Development Policy to create a holistic policy framework able to encompass the broad health, education, economic and investment requirements of effective childcare. The policy outlines cross-sectoral interventions in health, HIV and nutrition; access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene; early childhood education; child protection; and social protection. In terms of the workplace, the policy aims to extend and implement care-related labour market policies to enable parents to combine work and care better, and to foster pay parity.

The Government also developed new national guidelines for running childcare facilities, the most recent of which were passed in 2019. The Integrated ECD Models Guidelines, developed with UNICEF’s support, maps out the standards that such centres should maintain, from care to facilities, health, nutrition, safety and operations. These standards also include some high-level guidelines for setting up childcare in the workplace, listing steps to guide companies to establish childcare services. In December 2020, the Ministry for Gender and Family Protection (MIGEPROF) merged the two entities (NECDP and NCC) under its auspices responsible for implementing policy into one: the National Child Development Agency (NCDA). In January 2021, the newly formed NCDA was given a budget to implement the Government’s ECD policy framework, with funds made available primarily to monitor local childcare initiatives, support them to meet best practice guidelines, and track the health and well-being of children in their care. With an objective to support 20,000 village-based childcare centres and 45,000 home-based crèches, as well as improving standards and access, the Government’s ECD policy has ambitious coverage aspirations.

To determine if these national ambitions are being met, local authorities need to report on the number and performance of childcare centres in their community and the number of children these have served. It is, therefore, in the authorities’ interests to work closely with the emerging company-backed childcare facilities, as their service and quality helps authorities to meet their own targets. With such strong political backing and coordination potential in the newly formed and resourced NCDA, there are also opportunities for the private sector to build relationships with government by helping deliver these national goals, while boosting their own productivity. In sum, there is clear mutual interest for companies and local authorities to collaborate in their respective childcare service endeavours. However in practice, company-backed childcare facilities are largely set up without close reference to, or awareness of, the ECD policy priorities, guidelines or institutions which their work is helping to implement. This creates missed opportunities. For example, the 2019 Guidelines recommend that in every company-backed childcare facility, a parents committee be set up to formally liaise with company management on behalf of the parent users and to ensure that “proper functioning, handling issues arising at the centre, creating a sense of ownership and sustainability” can be fostered. In practice this is not being systematically implemented, but if adopted, would improve corporate childcare functioning. Simply put, the private sector does not know enough of the content and detail of the National Guidelines, when it should be utilising this to help improve its childcare services and meet recommended standards.

**Qualitative conclusions**

Providing childcare services to employees generates obvious value for companies, going far beyond intangible CSR and reputational enhancement. Concrete business benefits include – increased worker productivity, increased harvest yield and turnover and stronger relationships with exporters satisfied that social measures are in place to avoid damaging reputational risk. While providing childcare services stops short of being a formal, specific compliance requirement of certification bodies, it opens and protects sales channels and premium prices. In addition, by boosting the access and quality of childcare provision for Rwanda’s children, companies are directly helping implement a specific pillar of public policy, further enhancing their favourable standing with Government.

From a community-engagement perspective, the feedback gathered from the FGDs showed overwhelmingly positive parental support for the company childcare facilities. Parents clearly appreciated both the financial benefits to the family, and development and health benefits to the child that they gained from employer-supported childcare. This led them to express a willingness to pay more for improved quality service and to be more involved in childcare decision-making than they currently are. Parents actively requested continuous engagement beyond delegate visits, and opportunities to voice their many suggestions on how childcare centres might be further improved. The broad benefits cited by parents and their eagerness to improve quality and pay for improvements underlined the clear opportunity for companies to share costs and responsibility for running corporate childcare to boost their sustainability. In sum, the overwhelming takeaway from the qualitative data is that greater planning and coordination and systematic management in setting up and running childcare facilities is likely to yield even greater prospects for scale and value generation for companies, the government, parents and children alike.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NON-TEA SECTORS

The business case for employer-supported childcare can be extended to other agribusinesses. The analysis of considerations identifies commonalities across a number of factors. It concludes that demand and impact in other sectors will be positive, indicating that investment by employers makes good business sense.

While the objective of this study is to focus on and draw data from the experience of Rwanda’s tea sector with a view to encouraging the tea industry to scale this model sector-wide, for employer-supported childcare to become adopted nationally, businesses outside the tea sector will also need to follow suit. The study therefore included a preliminary assessment of the business case to invest in employer-supported childcare in agribusinesses more broadly, focusing on horticulture and floriculture as the most prominent sectors covered by IMSAR, to consider their replication potential.

Through key informant interviews, generation of broader data, and engagement with non-tea agribusinesses, this study has confirmed the challenges of employee retention and productivity that similarly affect other sectors. These could also be ameliorated through investment in employer-supported childcare facilities. To maximise the prospects of success, however, requires an adjustment to the parameters that this study uses, which are tea sector-specific. In other words, it would be essential to accommodate the differing conditions and types of employment contract in different agricultural sectors, along with variabilities in harvest cycles, and seasonal differences in employee requirements.

The table below provides a high-level comparison of key issues in building a company-backed, on-site, employer-supported childcare facility. These are of universal concern, and should be considered by non-tea agribusiness companies in Rwanda prior to embarking on the rollout of an employer-supported childcare initiative.

30. For example, floriculture has a greater reliance on fixed employees and greater skill-levels.
As the table above indicates, there will be some variables in the planning and rollout of viable employer-supported childcare initiatives across the tea and non-tea sectors. Nevertheless, while the mechanics and maths might vary, the value, demand and impact are likely to be similar. In any sector, it is essential to invest in detailed pre-system planning, and coordination should be addressed and resolved in the pre-launch planning phase. Ultimately, while each company will need to embark on its own preparatory and rollout stages, commonalities of issues and benefits from investing in employer-supported childcare will prevail.

Table 7

Comparison of considerations to inform investment in employer-supported childcare: tea and non-tea companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Tea</th>
<th>Non-tea</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>Fixed, casual</td>
<td>Fixed employees likely more stable, so need for incentives possibly lower than with casual workers. Casual workers harder to plan for, so childcare allocation might be harder to calculate. Casual agricultural workers might have greater distances to cover than fixed employees (e.g. working in a greenhouse). Centralised, employer-supported childcare facilities could be easier for fixed vs. casual workers, lowering costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Fixed</td>
<td>Willingness to pay is linked to the nature of employment. When the salary is variable and workers can earn more because their time has been freed up from childcare responsibilities, they are more likely to be willing to pay for the service. If it is fixed (e.g. at Safaricom) they are less willing to pay and a subsidy is more likely needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonality</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Perennial, seasonal</td>
<td>Perennial crops lead to stable employee numbers and constant payoffs from investing in an employer-supported childcare facility, whereas seasonal crops may result in downtime of use. This would extend ROI, making it difficult to operate without subsidy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Expansive</td>
<td>Expansive, compact</td>
<td>One of the greatest challenges to tea is optimising location of employer-supported childcare centres so that these are close enough to parents’ homes and places of work not to be a deterrent to using them. Other non-tea industries may benefit from more compact operations to build fewer centres and still meet demand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Urban-based agribusinesses (e.g. the NAEB packhouse) may be equally dependent as rural enterprises on childcare support to ensure consistent labour supply. In urban areas, however, the premium cost of space can make set-up prohibitive, and a hybrid model involving local childcare MSMEs might be preferable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Once any employer-supported childcare facilities are up and running, issues around management (centre operations, learning and nutritional content, unit centre costs, impact tracking) and regulatory issues are likely to be comparable. All facilities must operate under the same national guidelines and regulatory framework.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table above indicates, there will be some variables in the planning and rollout of viable employer-supported childcare initiatives across the tea and non-tea sectors. Nevertheless, while the mechanics and maths might vary, the value, demand and impact are likely to be similar. In any sector, it is essential to invest in detailed pre-system planning, and coordination should be addressed and resolved in the pre-launch planning phase. Ultimately, while each company will need to embark on its own preparatory and rollout stages, commonalities of issues and benefits from investing in employer-supported childcare will prevail.
03 STRATEGIC REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning for scale and achieving systemic change
STRATEGIC REMARKS FOR SCALE-UP

To ensure that adoption of childcare provision by companies is optimised and made more cost- and time-effective, and accelerated throughout the agricultural sector, site-specific operations and systems-level practices need to improve.

The tea sector’s work in designing corporate-backed employer-supported childcare facilities has proven influential in putting the lack of childcare at the forefront of private sector strategies for improving employee retention and productivity – and as a result, improving their own bottom line. UNICEF’s engagement in facilitating this process, building alliances with aggregators (like NAEB), networking with stakeholders, and influencing the agenda has advanced the employer-supported childcare agenda within the tea sector considerably and is building momentum for other sectors to adopt and adapt the approach to suit sectoral dynamics. The fact that this process has unfolded and matured against the backdrop of strongly supportive and complementary government policy has only strengthened prospects for scaling. At the same time, the assessment also identified significant constraints to adoption, scale and sustainability of employer-supported childcare. The strategic remarks, together with the qualitative and quantitative findings presented above, serve both as direct feedback to companies and to inform a set of recommendations presented in the next section, which aim to aid the sustainable scale-up of employer-supported childcare in Rwanda.

• **Employer-supported childcare is launched with no strategic guiding plan.** Most companies launch their childcare initiative focusing exclusively on investing in infrastructure for the facilities, overlooking key considerations needed to inform the model and ensure best performance. These include mapping expected demand, location selection to optimise balance between the worker’s residence and place of work, costs of ensuring total coverage, user engagement and buy-in, identification of strategic partnerships to reduce costs, and management challenges. Lack of investment in pre-planning suppresses return on investment. Unplanned rollout leading to insufficient coverage can create conflict among non-beneficiary employees who have no visibility of when they will be able to access the service.

• **Limited user consultation prior to employer-supported childcare starting up leads to sub-optimal performance.** Companies and UNICEF made the seemingly reasonable point of wanting to leave user engagement until post-construction, in order not to raise expectations prematurely. However, this led to several shortfalls:
  - Sub-optimal buy-in from users resulting in late adoption and delayed breakeven point. Management and workers highlighted the fact that it took mothers time to feel comfortable leaving their children with a non-family member or in an institution vs. at home, with the typical period reported as being anywhere from one week to one to two months. Adoption was also affected by insufficient investment in sensitising and engaging workers prior to opening the employer-supported childcare facilities. If this happens, it could take time to reach full capacity. Underutilisation, even if just for the first six months, undermines the full value of facility being realised by the employer and delays breakeven point. With fewer women relying on the service, productivity growth is tempered.
  - Sub-optimal coverage. Most companies were not able to provide 100% coverage for all eligible employees; at the same time, reaching full capacity can take time. For example, Sorwathe has around 1,500 workers of childbearing age but only three to four childcare facilities with a total capacity for 200 children, pointing to a likely deficit of coverage in future. By engaging users earlier, companies will be in a better position to ensure that the childcare facility they set up can cater not just for the number of potential users, but those confirmed as ready (perhaps through a staff survey) to use the service as soon as it starts up. This would ensure neither an under- nor excess supply of childcare provision, both of which would translate into unnecessary costs for the company.
• **The company bears the entire costs, even when users are willing to pay.** Interviews with tea farm managers showed that most had limited expectations of childcare users being prepared to contribute to the cost of running childcare facilities. However, feedback from the FGDs revealed a very different picture, with parental willingness to part-pay a clear takeaway. In fact, this grew over time as users came to appreciate the value of employer-supported childcare and were prepared to invest in improving its quality as they became more familiar with its benefits. For example, many users spoke of their willingness to contribute towards the costs of securing better trained teachers who could speak in English to their children, if this exceeded company budget. With quality of childcare services a concern, harnessing parents’ readiness to contribute to improvements is an opportunity that companies can ill-afford to miss, given the likely limit of their ability to fund blanket demand indefinitely.

• **There is no current exploration by companies of complementary childcare models.** Local community childcare facilities operational in the areas around the tea farms, although described as being lower quality than company-run alternatives, could provide cost-effective, community-based alternatives to meet overflow demand and increase user ownership. Investing in the costs of building owners’ capacity or support (for example, providing midday meals which are tied to workers’ attendance at work, to ensure childcare facilities are used) could boost local childcare entrepreneurs, while providing a solution that avoids incurring the CAPEX costs of building a dedicated facility from scratch. This might prove a more scalable and cost-effective strategy than the current approach pursued by Frigoken in Kenya, described above.

• **The management and quality of employer-supported childcare is often an afterthought.** With the notable exception of one of the company childcare facilities this report examined (which has served as a regional model for best practice), by and large those visited lacked clear schedules, quality or oversight. There was a distinct sense that managers mainly focused on setting up the bricks and mortar facility, and were somewhat unclear on how it would be managed, monitored, improved and replicated when it was up and running. Key factors overlooked included the qualifications of those hired to run the centres, and the need for a plan to monitor their performance and upskill their abilities; learning content or curriculum; a meal plan and nutritional strategy; a system to track quality, impact (on children and parents) and value of service; how to set up and run a parents committee; how to get and manage feedback; and how to set and manage payment for the service.

• **Tracking data to demonstrate impact was limited.** The quantitative and qualitative findings presented in section 2 demonstrate a clear business case for companies to invest in employer-supported childcare. However, systematic data collection to prove the business case internally to company boards or externally to attract investment was lacking. Creating systems for regular data collection would not be complicated, but companies will probably need support, as well as a lean framework that generates granular data to build their reputational standing further afield.

• **Partnership opportunities have been overlooked.** There is no clear process for identifying and consolidating key partnerships, for example with local government and NGOs, or even with private sector companies with an interest in child well-being and nutrition and/or sustainable/ethical sourcing. Partnerships like this can provide health, monitoring and capacity-building support to improve performance and results, yield co-financing and in-kind support, and ensure impact is documented and tracked. Increased planning, structure and intent could leverage additional expertise and resources, and build greater shared value and impact.

In sum, findings from this assessment point to an extremely promising initiative and model, which with greater investment in pre-planning and management roll out has compelling prospects for scale. The next section presents recommended strategies for enabling this process.
For employer-supported childcare to be mainstreamed, replicated and scaled throughout Rwanda, more comprehensive guidance and effective partnerships are recommended.

The Rwandan tea sector’s experience in setting up employer-supported childcare facilities shows that they boost worker productivity and retention. They increase company turnover and returns, and generate broader benefits in terms of worker engagement, loyalty, brand reputation and exporter relationships. While the assessment did not seek to measure positive impact on children, it obtained qualitative remarks which suggest that access to employer-supported childcare leads to improved children’s health and development outcomes.

The high-level takeaway is that while there is clearly sufficient evidence to generate confidence in the opportunity, insufficient guidance is available to the private sector, weakening impact from existing investment in employer-supported childcare. This lack of guidance ultimately compromises the potential for employer-supported childcare to move beyond ad hoc, company-driven initiatives and to reach scale, even when support from agencies such as UNICEF is available. In addition, to enable employer-supported childcare to reach scale sustainably while ensuring children’s safety and greatest development outcomes, far more focused coordination and partnerships between the private and public sector would be extremely beneficial. The effective implementation of the recommendations below will create core building blocks to facilitate scaled, corporate-backed childcare systems in Rwanda (Fig.7).

### Building blocks of scaled corporate-backed childcare systems in Rwanda

- **Well run, well monitored childcare centres are rolled out nationally, showing the potential for private / public / community partnerships and market-based change**

- **Childcare centres as hubs for value added, partner-driven activities from health monitoring, vaccinations, access to finance, livelihood support, community engagement**

- **Blueprint pilot testing in tea & non-tea sectors, rural and urban settings, company and cooperative**

- **Per company - internal and external planning, partnerships building, mapping coverage, conducting user focus groups, budgeting, staffing management systems and workplans.**

- **Sector wide - design a blueprint to guide businesses in setting up and implementing childcare, including a process roadmap, technical content, budgeting and operational templates and systems to track impact.**

- **Conduct M&E on pilots to tweak blueprint, further strengthen the business case and encourage adoption at scale.**

- **Scale & replication**

- **Piloting and model refinement**

- **Blueprint development**

**Figure 7**
RECOMMENDATION 1
DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE BLUEPRINT TO GUIDE EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED CHILDCARE INITIATIVES

One of the key constraints to the model’s potential to scale is the lack of a comprehensive, practical blueprint for companies to use in planning and implementing a cost-effective employer-supported childcare strategy that maximises user engagement and minimises time needed to reach 100% coverage and breakeven. For companies or cooperatives contemplating investing in an employer-supported childcare facility, having a document in hand - a blueprint - that provides a step-by-step guide would incentivise investment and ensure optimal results. A practical implementation roadmap such as this would eliminate much of the lost momentum, and the many costly, recurrent mistakes and risks observed across those companies already providing childcare, and facilitate further investment. The current ad hoc advisory that development agencies provide, while a welcome start, and a key reason for why employer-supported childcare facilities have cropped up in the tea sector over the past few years, remains insufficient to deliver a saleable industry-wide model. Capitalising on and maximising UNICEF’s investment and support to date, this study strongly recommends the creation of a blueprint with technical inputs from childcare/development/management expert specialists.

The blueprint would generate substantial benefits in boosting quality of service and impact, both to the private sector, workers and children, by:

- Streamlining how employer-supported childcare centres should be set up, who should run and support them and what will be provided;
- Facilitating investment at scale beyond donor-supported initiatives; and
- Integrating this process within an aligned partnership framework, complementing private sector investment and thus enhancing prospects of success at scale (see also Recommendation #3).

Elements of the blueprint (expanded on in Annex 5) would include guidance on:

- How to determine user need and demand;
- How to identify the most suitable childcare model and location of facility/facilities, taking into account access and cost-effectiveness;
- Step-by-step, how to engage parent-users in the childcare planning and operational process, including suggested mechanisms for shared cost and management;
- A template for budgeting for CAPEX and OPEX costs of childcare facilities;
- A system and linked reports for tracking (1) attendance at childcare facilities, correlated to (2) worker attendance and productivity accounts;
- Sample educational content (e.g. learning materials for a starter pack covering a 3–6 month period); and
- Potential partnerships and synergies able to attract additional investment and facilitate coordination with relevant market players.
RECOMMENDATION 2

PILOT THE BLUEPRINT TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION, INCLUDING BEYOND THE TEA SECTOR

After creating the blueprint, the next challenge will be to support its successful adoption, encouraging the sector further to invest in employer-supported childcare and to ensure future sustainability with limited support. Left to apply the blueprint on their own, companies may, at least initially, be reluctant to do so independently. The second recommendation is therefore to support a guided pilot implementation of the blueprint for companies and cooperatives in the tea and non-tea sectors. This will foster replication. There should be at least two blueprint pilots (one each in the tea and non-tea sectors) and ideally at least two pilots, to include rural and non-rural locations.

Piloting the tea sector blueprint could take place at a company/cooperative which currently has no childcare facilities, and ideally has yet to start any formal planning. This will test the blueprint from the facility’s inception. In parallel, the recommendation is that the blueprint be retroactively applied to at least two other companies: one that already has childcare and the second that is just starting the implementation process (such as an RMT company or Sorwathe/Gisovu). The study also advises conducting a light-touch assessment of to what extent the companies find adopting the blueprint enhances their childcare facility operations, user engagement and scalability of initiatives already underway. Results from this assessment should serve to review the blueprint as needed and promote its adoption.

For the second blueprint pilot (in a non-tea, urban context), a potential option is the NAEB packhouse in Kigali. This is used by over two dozen fruit and vegetable exporters, and requires intensive bursts of labour, which is often sub-optimal due to the childcare challenges the female employees face. Women make up the majority of the workforce and many are mothers to preschool children. Given the intensive rotational need for on-site packers, the packhouse is likely to enjoy consistent demand for childcare, as well as the ability to provide cross-company benefits and cost-effectiveness by operational expenses being shared. Options would be to set up employer-supported childcare on site or tap into and upgrade an existing facility in the neighbourhood. Consultations with NAEB, exporters and workers already clearly confirm the high demand for conveniently located facilities.

In terms of the technical expertise required for the tea/non-tea and rural/urban pilots, the first priority is to define the precise model for each pilot, with reference to the table of model types (Table 1). The assumption is that the range of company-owned, hybrid and local market/entrepreneur models, already being applied in practice and shown to have worked, will continue. The key difference that this report recommends is an additional technical input, to (1) identify technical advisors able to support companies in the planning and launch of employer-supported childcare facilities, and (2) post-launch, identify a centralised technical content and capacity-building advisor able to provide content, schedules, up-skilling and reporting systems for all corporate childcare schemes. Accessing these will enable participating companies to draw on and improve operational efficiencies, quality of service and impact monitoring, and avoid them each inventing a daily operating systems wheel.

This research touched on but did not dig deep into the realities of childcare facilities set up by cooperatives associated with tea farms. Using one such example in the pilot study would enrich learning, and the model’s viability and applicability. This research indicated a weakness in employer-supported childcare service delivery which arose when it was conceptualised purely in terms of a building to house children in. When such childcare services have no recourse to tailored, age-appropriate content, or systems to structure daily operations, their quality suffers. The study recommends providing refreshed learning content on a regular basis, as well as training and ongoing support to ensure the collecting of attendance and child health and development data. This would vastly improve the functionality, benefits and quantifiable impact of individual employer-supported childcare facilities, as well as the profile and contribution of the private sector towards government childcare policies overall. Entities that could provide this type of support already exist and should be leveraged.
The importance of childcare goes beyond the clear business case it represents to the private sector. Investing in preschool childcare has been increasingly recognised as a critical cross-cutting issue that impacts on child wellbeing and development, nutrition and health; women’s economic empowerment and access to work; and national economic and development outcomes across a country’s economic sectors. Similarly, childcare facilities are of interest to private and public sector actors alike, as they have been shown to tap into organic social networks and have the potential to influence opportunities at all demographic levels. As such, childcare facilities are a catalyst for community and national change, and their opportunities for networking make childcare initiatives fertile ground for partnerships.

As noted in the UNICEF Rwanda Strategy Note for 2018-2023, while the overall picture of child health and development demonstrates slight improvements, multi-sector and partnership-dependent social protection measures aimed at addressing multiple overlapping deprivations are advised to overcome systemic poverty. From this perspective, multi-stakeholder partnerships to bolster the viability and impact of corporate childcare make enormous social, economic and political sense. The model in play in Rwanda’s tea’s sector has however not done enough yet to explore such linkages. Nevertheless, stakeholder feedback and examples from other case studies prove that ample opportunities exist, which can be harnessed to build impact, scale and sustainability. The next section presents a few of these.

**Public sector partnerships as a vehicle for implementing government policy**

There are several opportunities for improved coordination and effective partnerships between the private sector investing in childcare services and the public sector. However, while some examples of private-public engagement exist, these tend to be unstructured, leaving much of the potential untapped.

For instance, a partnership with the NCDA could be tasked with, among others, monitoring childcare facilities, and would lead to substantial benefits to both private and public sector partners. The private sector company investing in childcare would benefit from NCDA’s expertise and resources to provide independent, official oversight, guidance, and affirmation that company childcare facilities are monitored, approved and compliant. These are currently missing and their absence can create significant risks. On the other hand, employer-supported childcare facilities provide a unique opportunity for structured, continuous delivery of cognitive development and stimulation. Although the quality of education they provide is not up to speed, nevertheless, they provide space and opportunity for quality care to emerge. The private sector would thus contribute to realising NCDA’s objectives. Investment in a formal private-public sector partnerships between NCDA and company-backed childcare initiatives will allow the early wins made by the Rwandan tea sector to better realise its potential for national replication.

Similarly, private sector-supported childcare facilities can provide great value to national and local health authorities by enabling the latter to access disparate, vulnerable and hard-to-reach children congregated in one place. Such facilities can conveniently administer health monitoring, vaccinations and boosters. They also make it easier to promote behaviour change among parents, as the peer-to-peer interaction facilitated by being in the same location with the same experience enhances the prospect that improved health practices, promoted by employer-supported childcare and accessed there by parents, are translated into the home. The study shows that many employer childcare initiatives have built ad hoc relationships with local government health workers, who utilise the company facilities to undertake health monitoring of the children, and relay findings to parents where possible. Again, a formal partnership and enhanced coordination with the Ministry of Health, can achieve substantial gains.

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In sum, if corporate-backed childcare facilities can be demonstrated to (1) enjoy broad user support, (2) generate tangible financial returns from improved worker productivity, and (3) have demonstrable societal impacts, then complimentary resources and partnerships to reduce the cost to companies, while further enhancing their reputational standing are likely to be secured. We strongly recommend streamlining and standardising the rules of engagement and partnership, from the national policy level to local government, and implementing them. This will improve efficiency of practice and use of resources, and facilitate the sharing of data regarding impact between all bodies concerned. This report proposes setting up a coordinating consortium, probably comprising NCDA, NAEB, UNICEF and other facilitating agencies. This would be a logical place to start.

**Partnerships with development agency cooperation/aid – WFP example**

International agencies have shared interests in cost-effective, scalable approaches to tackling nutritional priorities in communities with high indices of malnutrition, such as those found in rural Rwanda. For example, the World Food Programme (WFP)'s 2019–2023 country policy for Rwanda includes Strategic Objective 3 – Ending Malnutrition, with a key intended outcome to end malnutrition among children under five years old. With target activities being to provide capacity strengthening support to national programmes that improve the nutritional status of targeted populations, building partnerships to support the provision of food to targeted populations through the trackable and structured medium of corporate sponsored and managed childcare facilities, which provide meals and track children's health, could be of mutual impact and cost benefit.

This study involved an exploratory conversation with WFP on this prospect, which affirmed several areas of mutual interest between companies, WFP and NCDA, to consider. Tracking child nutritional practices and their impact on health is not only of interest to WFP. Local authorities are responsible for collecting this data for central government, and would no doubt welcome being able to assess previously disparate children in one centralised location with a clear, structured registration system to facilitate cost-effective monitoring. Tiny Totos is a childcare-focused social enterprise which works actively with WFP and local authorities to boost nutritional well-being among marginalised communities and tracks the health impacts of these interventions with health authorities. It provides a regional precedent for this type of collaboration (that also involves partnerships with local businesses producing the fortified foods used in the childcare facilities).

Moreover, the combination of trackable employer-supported childcare attendance, nutritional provision and child health outcomes provides an ideal scenario for a cash-based transfer scheme. This would reward positive interventions which can be directly tracked and shown to reduce child malnutrition. In this scenario, the value of the employer-supported childcare network and data monitoring to organisations like WFP could result in them contributing to the cost of food or monitoring, in return for access to the overall infrastructure and child aggregation hub they were able to tap into, thanks to investments already made by companies.

One of the strongest and most consistent findings is that cash transfers improve food security, both increasing overall food expenditure and helping families purchase higher quality, more nutrient-dense foods. These are proven to benefit children’s health, especially that of the poorest and those living in rural areas. The impact of cash-based transfers on the uptake of preventative services (such as immunisation) can also be significant. For example, South Africa’s Child Support Grant was launched in 1998 with the support of gender-responsive budget initiatives, and has become ‘the single biggest programme for alleviating child poverty in South Africa’. In 2015, the USD 22.75 monthly grant, indexed to inflation, was paid to 11.7 million children’s caregivers, 96% of whom were women. The programme has also featured a wide array of care-related benefits, with children better fed, healthier, more likely to go to school, and less likely to work outside the home.
Partnerships with the private sector to expand service coverage, and facilitate scale and sustainability

Employer-supported childcare facilities provide opportunities for the private sector to overcome challenges related to fragmented markets and potential but difficult-to-reach customers. While still emergent, such opportunities for these facilities to act as an hub are noticeable. For instance, Tiny Totos in Kenya has partnered with several companies and acquired financing from the Nordic Development Fund, Grand Challenges Canada and others to provide its employer-supported childcare parent network with access to a range of livelihood-improving, affordable products they would struggle to find in the local market. This operates through a payroll direct deduction scheme, and examples include clean cookstoves from Koko Stoves, water filters from Aqua Clara and smartphones from Huawei. In this research’s FGDs, many parents expressed interest in these types of services, and this report recommends these opportunities be explored. Companies and social enterprises invest heavily to create localised distribution channels and influence which an employer-supported childcare parent network could readily double up for. If by leveraging their economies of scale, these parent networks can secure reduced prices for critical livelihood products for their members (which will also boost loyalty and retention to the company providing the childcare even more) or even payment for access to these networks (to offset a portion of childcare operational costs), corporate childcare initiatives can be strengthened even further. In sum, additional private sector partnerships can boost benefits and impacts of corporate childcare without additional – and potentially with a reduction in – costs to companies.
FGDS GUIDELINE

A key component of the field research is to conduct FGDs in the field, with the target members being mothers – and fathers – who have used employer-supported childcare facilities, and to understand user experience, concerns and benefits derived from accessing this support. The report used the question guide below with focus groups in March 2021. As the aim was to foster authentic flow of conversation and feedback, the questions were meant as a guide rather than a set of structured questions needing to be covered in all instances.

1. Do you have a child of preschool age? Yes / No (to get idea of whether we have the appropriate people in the group)
2. If yes – how old? (to get an idea of the group’s age range)
3. What do you do with your child when you are at work? (leave them at home / bring to work in field / leave at employer-supported childcare facility / other). Explore all the positives and negatives of the options provided.
4. Does the tea farm you work at provide childcare facilities? Yes / No
5. If no, do you think having employer-supported childcare would be helpful for you? (explore if the respondent would be inclined to use employer-supported childcare if it was available).
6. For those with access to childcare: What childcare arrangements do you currently have, if any? If so, how much do you pay for it?
7. For those who currently use a company ECD facility. What did you use before you had use of the company ECD centre, and how much did you pay for this?
8. If you do have a company childcare facility, do you use it? If no, why not?
9. If you do use it, for how long have you been using it?
10. Were you comfortable leaving your child at first? Yes / no (explore reasons – this speaks to adoption rate. For example, if they were comfortable, what helped them become so – other parents’ feedback / pre-opening sensitisation / presence of a community health volunteer / other?)
11. If no, are you comfortable now? (as above, explore reasons).
12. Does the employer-supported childcare help you to work more days? More hours? Or fewer? Or the same? (explore answers and reasons).
13. What are the benefits you have experienced from accessing employer-supported childcare?
14. Apart from the employer-supported childcare, what other factors might have influenced you to work more (or less) hours during this period.
15. Apart from having a small child, what other factors might have influenced you to work more (or less) hours during period.
16. If you attend an employer-supported childcare facility, do you contribute anything for this service? (money, time, food, other)
17. If so, would you be willing to provide tangible support if that were necessary to maintain the service? This could be in terms of:
   a. Time - to help run the facility
   b. Money - to support existing or expanded running costs
   c. Goods – e.g. food to prepare meals
18. If you do not have access to employer-supported childcare, would you be willing to provide tangible support if that were necessary to start the service? This could be in terms of:
   a. Time - to help run the facility
   b. Money - to support existing or expanded running costs
   c. Goods – e.g. food to prepare meals
19. Is there any aspect of the service that you think could be improved to make it more convenient / to improve quality? E.g.
   a. Opening hours
   b. Staff (numbers, capacity)
   c. Child content
   d. Facilities etc.
20. If you have an employer-supported childcare facility – Can you describe the training or other services (e.g. health monitoring) that you or your child have received since the facility began. Have these been helpful?
21. Have you and other parents attending the employer-supported childcare begun any other activities because of your shared experience sending children to the facility, e.g. savings groups, anything else? If so, please describe.
22. Would you use / support / prefer alternative forms of childcare centres, perhaps run by mothers’ groups, closer to home, mobile options, other? Or is the company-run model preferred?
23. For those with employer-supported childcare – have you observed any changes in your children since sending them to an childcare, and if so, in what way?
24. For those with employer-supported childcare – Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about the childcare facility – positive or negative feedback, recommendations for improvement?
25. For those without employer-supported childcare – Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about how a childcare facility might improve (or detract) from your work / home / parenting balance?

Note: For husbands / fathers – same questions as above. However, explore further around their perception of their wives’ productivity and whether they support this, as well as their willingness to pay for the service.
## COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS
### STANDARD SCENARIO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Extra Revenue</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Extra monthly yield per worker</td>
<td>kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Extra annual yield per worker (a*12)</td>
<td>kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Black tea equivalent (b/4.1)</td>
<td>kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Black tea price per kg</td>
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<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Black tea value (c*d)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Worker’s salary per kg</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>Worker annual extra income (b*f)</td>
<td>USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Extra profit per worker (e-g)</td>
<td>USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Childcare attendance # children</td>
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**Total profit (h*i)**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>USD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAPEX:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment (beds, mattresses, etc.)</td>
<td>USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPEX:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff salaries</td>
<td>USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials (stationaries, etc.)</td>
<td>USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous (utilities, maintenance, etc.)</td>
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**Total costs**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net position</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cumulative</strong></td>
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**Return on Investment (ROI)**  

%
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<th>Year</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<td>81.66</td>
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<td>84.13</td>
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<td>970.20</td>
<td>979.90</td>
<td>989.70</td>
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<td>603.42</td>
<td>615.55</td>
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<td>561.56</td>
<td>572.84</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.00</td>
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<td>30.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
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<td>5,615.56</td>
<td>11,456.86</td>
<td>17,530.71</td>
<td>23,844.11</td>
<td>30,404.22</td>
<td>88,851.45</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Costs**

**CAPEX:**
- Building: USD 30,000.00
- Equipment (beds, mattresses, etc.): USD 5,000.00

**OPEX:**
- Staff salaries: USD 5,000.00, 5,050.00, 5,100.50, 5,151.51, 5,203.02
- Food: USD 500.00, 1,020.00, 1,530.00, 2,040.00, 2,550.00
- Materials (stationaries, etc.): USD 50.00, 51.00, 52.02, 53.06, 54.12
- Miscellaneous (utilities, maintenance, etc.): USD 1,000.00, 1,020.00, 1,040.40, 1,061.21

**Total costs:** USD 35,000.00, 6,550.00, 7,141.00, 7,722.92, 8,305.77

**Net position:** USD -35,000.00, -934.44, 4,315.86, 9,807.99, 15,538.33, 21,514.64

**Cumulative:** USD -35,000.00, -35,934.44, -31,618.59, -21,810.79, -6,272.46, 15,242.18

**Return on Investment (ROI):** 20.71%
CBA SUMMARY AND UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

Results from the cost-benefit analysis below suggest that (1) CAPEX would be paid back after three years of employer-supported childcare activity, (2) employer-supported childcare becomes profit-generating once it secures attendance of 20 children, (3) an employer-supported facility operating at full capacity (50 children) generates profit exceeding USD 20,000 annually, and (4) over a five-year period the investment will have a positive net position of over USD 15,000, representing a return on investment of 20.71%. Details of the assumptions made are presented below.

Notes:

Initial extra monthly yield per worker is estimated at 80.85 kg and assumed to increase by 1%/year from the following year (greater plantation yields over the years).

Green Leaf to Black Tea ratio is assumed constant at 4.1 (conservative).

Black tea price at USD 2.55/kg as per Mata’s 2019 average price at Mombasa tea auction and assumed to increase at the rate of 1%/year. This can be considered a conservative estimate – according to the International Trade Centre, the average price for exports of Rwandan tea was 2.77$/kg in 2019.32 However, price volatility is high, with the value varying between USD 2.12/kg (2015) and USD 3.21/kg (2017) over the last five years.

Workers’ salary assumed at RWF 42.5/kg (averaged across factories). Worker and staff salaries are assumed to increase by 1%/year in US dollars. This low growth is due to the fact that salaries are expressed in foreign currency – the Rwandan franc has consistently depreciated against the US dollar over the last five years.

CAPEX and OPEX median figures estimated from factory data obtained during the scoping visit.

Childcare attendance is assumed to be low over the first few years and to increase consistently to reach full capacity (50) after five years. This is a conservative assumption; based on the factories visited, full capacity could be assumed to be reached after three to four years (or even faster through the proactive engagement of factory workers).

32 International Trade Centre, HS Code 0902. Available at: https://www.trademap.org/Product_SelCountry_TS.aspx?vpm=1%7c646%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c4%7c1%7c%7c%7c%7c%7c3%7c1%7c1.https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/early-childhood matters/brain-development/.
## LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tea</strong></td>
<td>Sorwathe Tea Factory</td>
<td>Rohith Peiris</td>
<td>Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gisovu Tea Factory</td>
<td>Allan Mwangi, Justin Lepcha</td>
<td>General Manager, Assistant Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rwanda Mountain Tea (RMT Group)</td>
<td>Alain Kabeja</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mata Tea Factory (RMT)</td>
<td>Emmanuel Kanyesigye</td>
<td>Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rutsiro Tea Factory (RMT)</td>
<td>Robin Winter</td>
<td>Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nyabihu Tea Factory (RMT)</td>
<td>Thushara Pinidiya</td>
<td>Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rwanda Mountain Tea (RMT Group)</td>
<td>Job Kihara</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Horticulture</strong></td>
<td>Bella flowers</td>
<td>Ephrem Kwitonda</td>
<td>Agriculture Marketing Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Garden fresh</td>
<td>Aimable Gakirage</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government</strong></td>
<td>National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB)</td>
<td>Sandrine Urujeni</td>
<td>Chief Operations Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Chilcare Development Agency (NCDA)</td>
<td>Freya Zaninka De Clereq</td>
<td>Head of Early Learning, Parent Education and Child Protection Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB)</td>
<td>Dr. Chantal Ingabire</td>
<td>Agricultural Economist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF)</td>
<td>Mireille Batamuliza</td>
<td>Director General for Family promotion and child protection directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-governmental</strong></td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>Boniface Kakhobwe, Pierre Nzeyimana</td>
<td>ECD</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
<td>Patrice Nzeyimana</td>
<td>Programme Policy Officer, Agricultural Programmes, Rwanda</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Taylors of Harrogate</td>
<td>Alice Tollan</td>
<td>Sustainability Development Specialist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED CHILDCARE ROADMAP

PHASE 1: Preparation Phase

During phase 1, pre-childcare, key steps need to be undertaken

- **Coverage** How many childcare centres are needed to cater to demand? Both in terms of numbers and geography, taking into account location of work and homes
- **Cost** How much will it cost to cater to 100% demand, and maintain services once built? Knowing that capex approval is often easier to obtain than recurrent OPEX
- **User engagement** What are the intended users’ attitudes towards the childcare? Do they want it? What is their willingness to pay?
- **Management** Who will run the centre? What will be the content, schedule and who will decide such matters? What standards of qualifications/training will be set?
- **Compliance** Will the facility and intended management system meet the 2019 Minimum Standards guidelines for early childhood development?
- **Partnerships** What partners – able to support childcare management, health, nutrition, childcare content and expertise, M&E – from government to inter-governmental agencies nationally and locally – can be forged to build value, impact and reduce costs of the childcare services?
- **Workplan** Mapping a schedule and budget by which the childcare facilities, and likely multiple childcare centres to enable coverage, will be

**Phase 2: employer-supported childcare model implementation**

With user / company buy-in for the concept, budget and workplan secured, the next step is to:

- **Establish the number of facilities** taking into account coverage, demand and geographical locations of users. Is workplace fixed or mobile? Fixed buildings make investment sense, but with mobile workplaces, or if multiple residential origins of workers are a factor and budget a concern, accommodation may be needed.
- **Set up a committee.** The majority of members should be users, but also ensure management representation and participation of local government to oversee the facility's operations. Ensure user engagement, ownership and buy-in, as well as transparency of decision-making.
- **Hire skilled staff and / or a skilled childcare partner to devise management and content schedule** Quality childcare provision is more than a room – it requires quality content, systems and trained staff to ensure that child outcomes are optimised.
- **Set up operational oversight and data tracking systems** which are simple, replicable and able to protect quality operations. These are critical if child wellbeing is to be guaranteed.

**Phase 3a: operational management and value creation**

- **Ensure that operational oversight, committee meetings and data tracking systems are implemented and sustained** according to a fixed schedule, with periodic independent oversight to ensure quality control.
- **Institute regular training** and assessment of personnel
- **Check coverage, wait list, capacity every 12 months.**
- **Periodically assess parental willingness to pay** as this is likely to increase over time as value of the service increases
- **Actively seek partnerships** quality childcare is a cross-cutting issue, of interest to local government, international institutions and companies working towards women’s economic empowerment, child development and improved nutrition, to those wanting to market and sell products and services to a family / child / maternal demographic. Forging such partnerships on the basis of corporate-backed childcare’s respective and aggregated ability to influence, track, disseminate services and products to a defined, loyal parent customer base, will improve the value of the service to users and is likely to reduce costs to the company, as well as improving prospects for a growing degree of the facilities’ self-sustainability.
- **Explore devolved models** if over flow becomes a concern, or coverage cannot cater to a widespread user residential or working footprint, companies and cooperatives can explore investing in the upskilling of community-based or entrepreneur-run childcare models, to further reduce responsibility and liability for solving employee childcare challenges while also seeding local ownership and childcare entrepreneurship opportunities in the process.

**Phase 3b: m&e**

- **Child records** Ensure all children are registered and have unique records/ID to track attendance and correlate against parent and child data (see Annex 6 for sample form).
- **Track parent productivity data** against child attendance to track impact on worker productivity and returns to company
- **Track health, development reports against child attendance** to determine child benefits from access to childcare.
- **Ensure regular (monthly) site assessments** are conducted to ensure quality of childcare centres (sanitation, staffing, schedule etc) is maintained – over and above NCDA facilitated assessments.
QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

1. Data collection

To estimate the impact of the employer-supported childcare facilities on productivity and attendance, each tea factory was requested to complete a template (see below) with productivity and attendance data for 80 workers over the period 2017–2020, covering:

- 40 workers with children who used the childcare facilities; and
- 40 workers with children of similar age who did not use the childcare facilities.

For a margin of error of 5% and a confidence interval of 90%, the required sample size for a population of 45 individuals is 39. The population size is based on the average capacity of childcare facilities, though it is actually lower due to the fact that some workers have more than one child at the childcare facility. The confidence interval thus may be closer to 95%.

We also included additional fields for date of birth of each child, along with when the parent started and last used the facilities.

2. Econometric modelling

Statistical modelling was undertaken to control for the age of the child (benefits may differ based on child age) and for workers’ individual productivity over time. Data from the factories (Mata, Rutsiro, and three other factories in Nyabihu – Cyamabuye, Mutaho, and Rutuku) was compiled into panel series, and regressions with varying treatment start time and duration using a flexible difference-in-differences approach\(^\text{33}\) were run for the three key dependent variables: production (volume plucked per month), attendance (number of days worked per month), and productivity (volume plucked per day worked).

The variable of interest, childcare attendance, was coded as a dummy variable taking a value of ‘0’ for the months for which each worker did not send its child to the childcare centre, and a value of ‘1’ for the months for which the child attended the childcare centre. For pre-childbirth months and up to six months later, the variable was set as missing to avoid including irrelevant observations (women without children, and women with children too young to go to the childcare centre). Time-invariant differences (such as geographical factors) between the five factories was controlled for by panel fixed effects, and factory dummies were included to control for any additional factory-specific differences (such as the provision of training in a factory, or any other firm-specific variation).

It should be noted that the lack of statistical significance for attendance could be due to limited data availability. Smaller samples lead to higher minimum detectable effects (for a confidence interval of 90%) which means that smaller impacts remain non-significant (the model cannot identify smaller impacts).

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child 1</th>
<th>Child N (repeat as necessary)</th>
<th>Volumes (KGs of green leaves plucked per month)</th>
<th>Attendance (Number of days worked per month)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Childcare start date (c)</td>
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**40 Women with children aged 2-6 years old who used the childcare centre**

**40 Women with children aged 2-6 years old who did NOT use the childcare centre**