

Thailand Child Support Grant (CSG) Impact Evaluation Report

A nationally-led impact evaluation designed to provide policy-level inputs for improving the programme's effectiveness and effectiveness and efficiency in the early years to maximize the impact on key outcomes for young children.

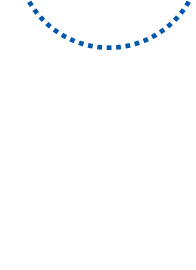
OVERVIEW

- 2015: April** The Government of Thailand introduced an unconditional Child Support Grant for children up to 1 year of age living in poor and near-poor households across the nation to improve the status of young children in the country, particularly in relation with their nutritional status.
- 2015: May** The programme was announced, designed and implemented at an unprecedented pace – rolling out within 6 months of the approval and implementation decisions.
- 2015: October** The grants were first distributed.
- 2016: March** The government expanded age-eligibility to cover the initially eligible children for an additional two years (up from 1 years of age to 3) with an increase in the benefit value to THB 600 per month effective October 2016.
- 2019: April** The age group was expanded from 0-3 to 0-6 years of age and the maximum annual income threshold was increased from 36,000 Thai Baht to 100,000 Thai Baht.



Who were our partners?

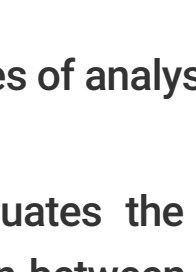
- Funding:**
- UNICEF
 - ThaiHealth Promotion Foundation (THPF)
- Research:**
- Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI)
 - KhonKaen University
 - Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI)



What was our objective?

To assess the achievements of the CSG against expectations from the programme in the short and medium terms.

It also aims to identify areas for improvement in terms of programme design and implementation to enhance the programme's impact, efficiency and effectiveness.



METHODOLOGY: HOW DID WE DO IT?

The report relied on three types of analyses:

- 1. Impact assessment:** Evaluates the programme's impact on beneficiary children between 0 and 1 years of age (and eventually included those between 0 to 3 years of age), their mother or caregivers, and their households.
- 2. Targeting assessment:** Analyses the extent to and efficiency with which the CSG reaches the households that need support – exploring inclusion and exclusion errors in design and implementation.
- 3. Process review:** Provides a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of programme implementation, beneficiary and stakeholder outlook on eligibility criteria, and enrolment processes.

Why?

Quasi-experimental longitudinal study

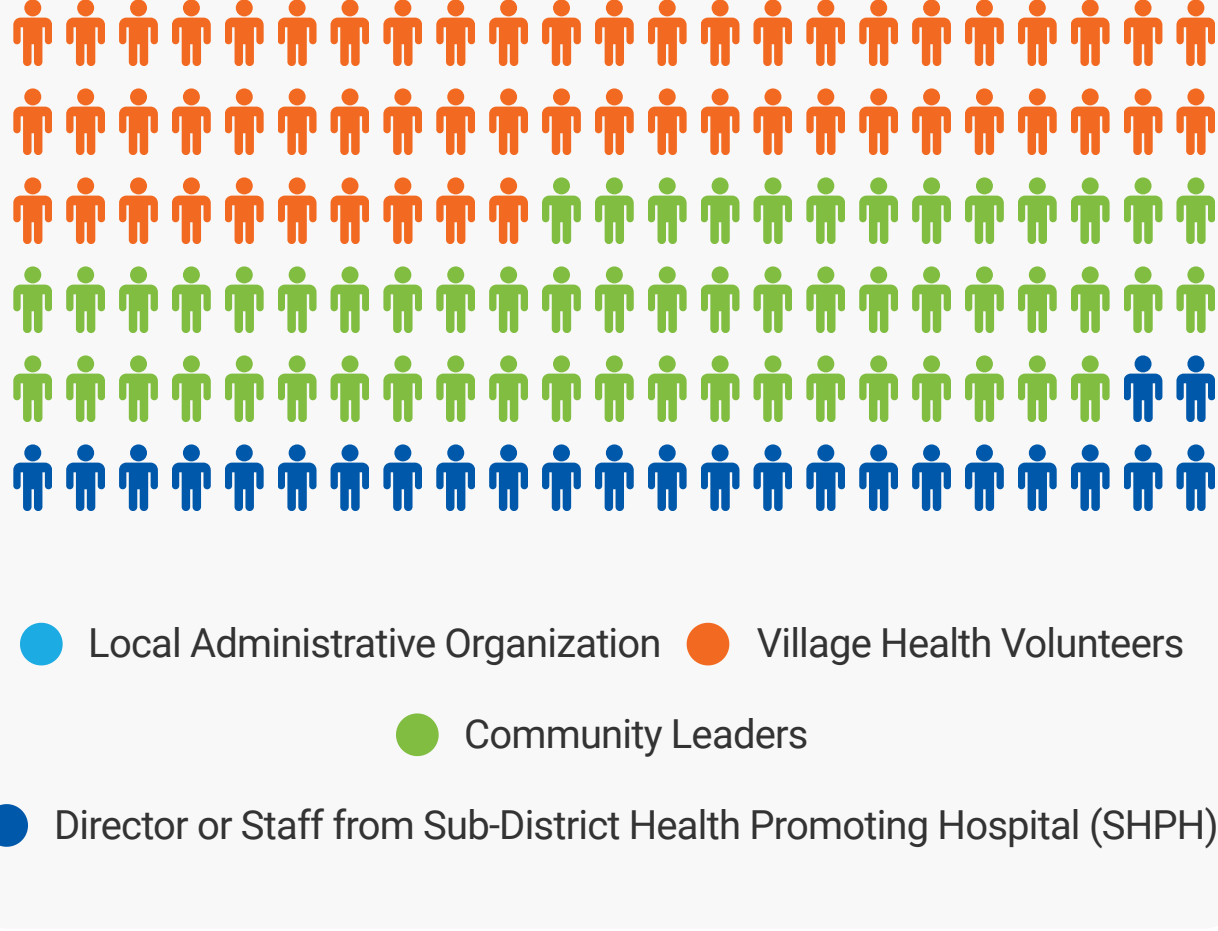
Why?

Mixed methods: Quantitative and qualitative

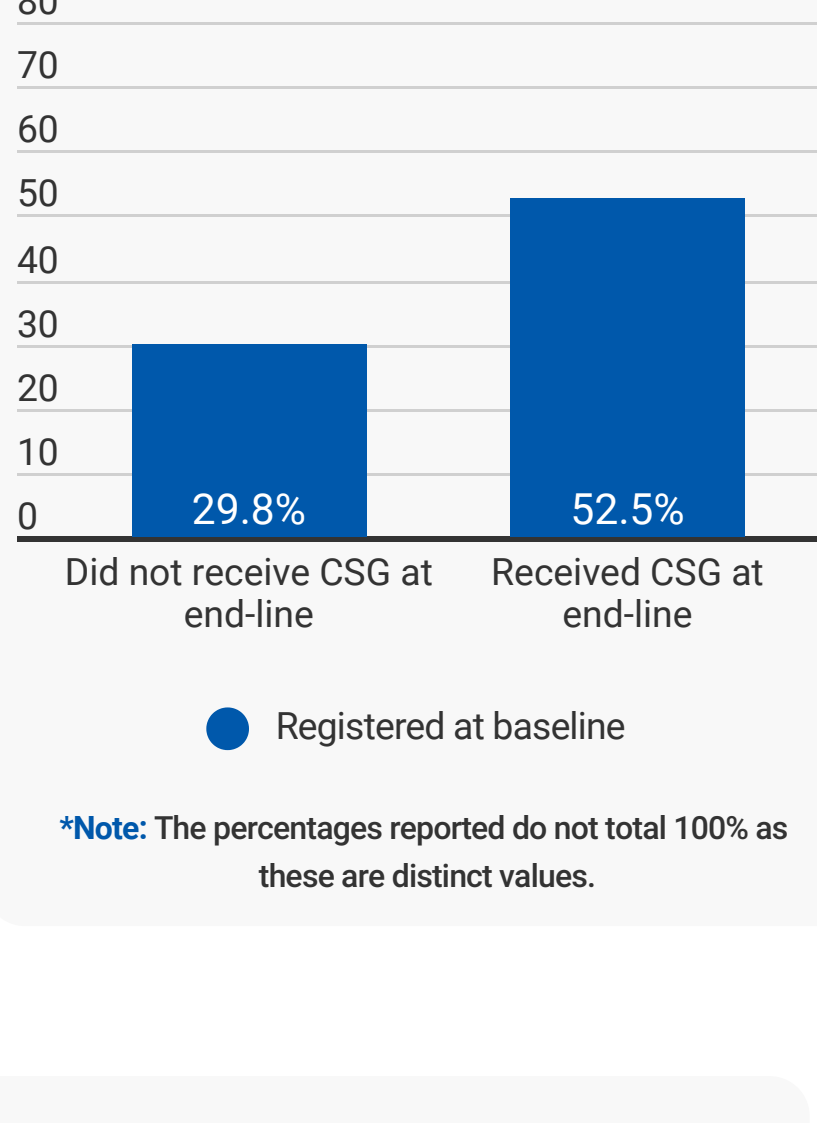
Why?

Data collected through baseline and endline collection process

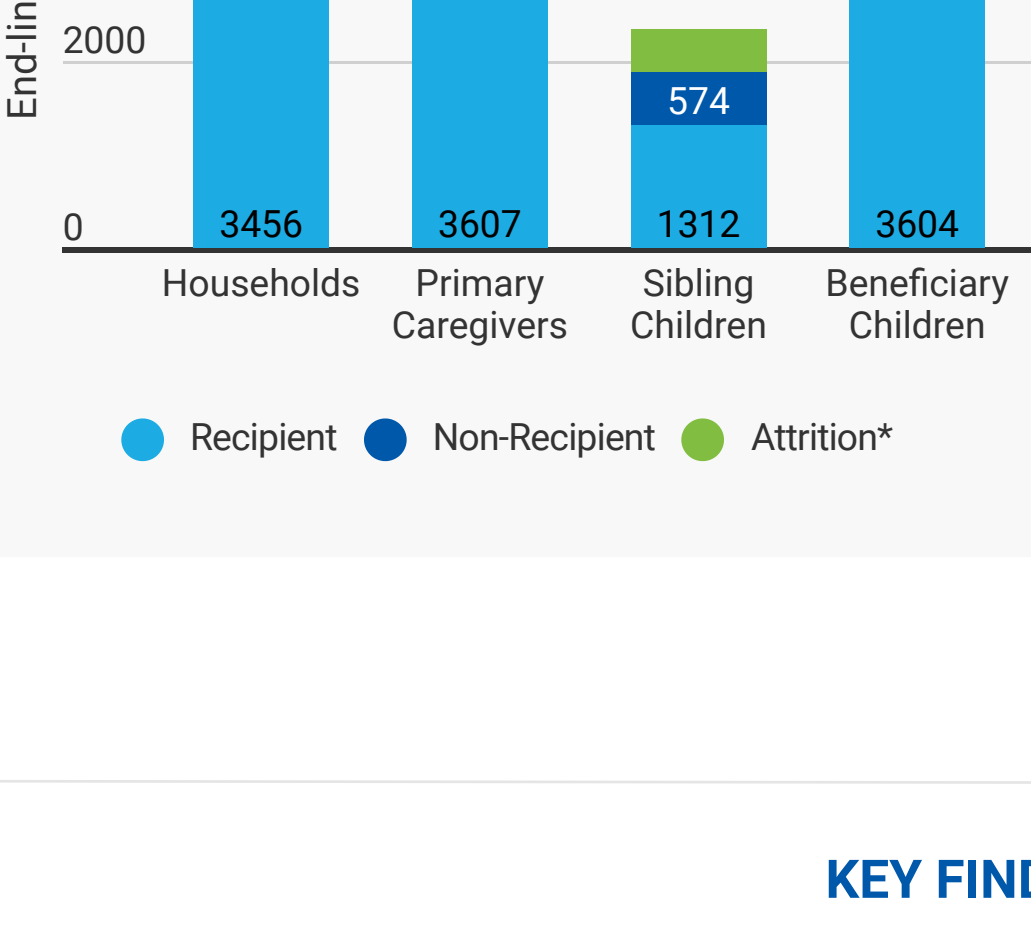
Key Informants



CSG vs. Registration



Sample Size:



A total of 5,667 households were interviewed at baselines and 5,061 at end-line with a response rate of 89%.

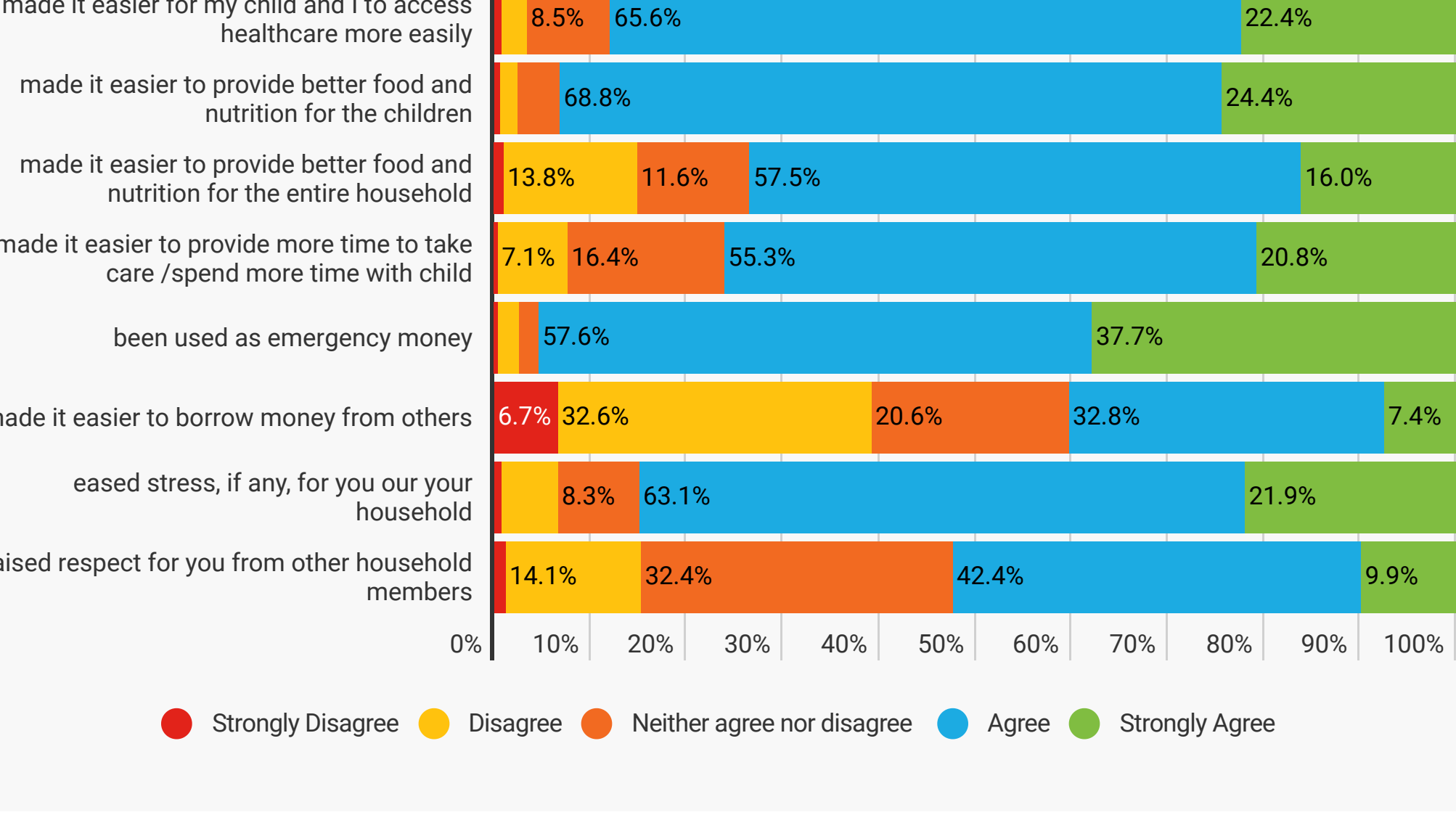
*Note: There was attrition due to the death of children between birth date and end-line, miscarriage and in some cases, an outbreak of infection. However, the team interviewed all of the 5,061 households at end-line.

KEY FINDINGS

End-line Findings:

This section presents the findings from the end-line analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected for Thailand's CSG. The findings integrate results from both quantitative and qualitative evaluations. A preliminary analysis of the baseline characteristics of receiving and non-receiving households indicates that receiving households are more disadvantaged than the non-receiving households.

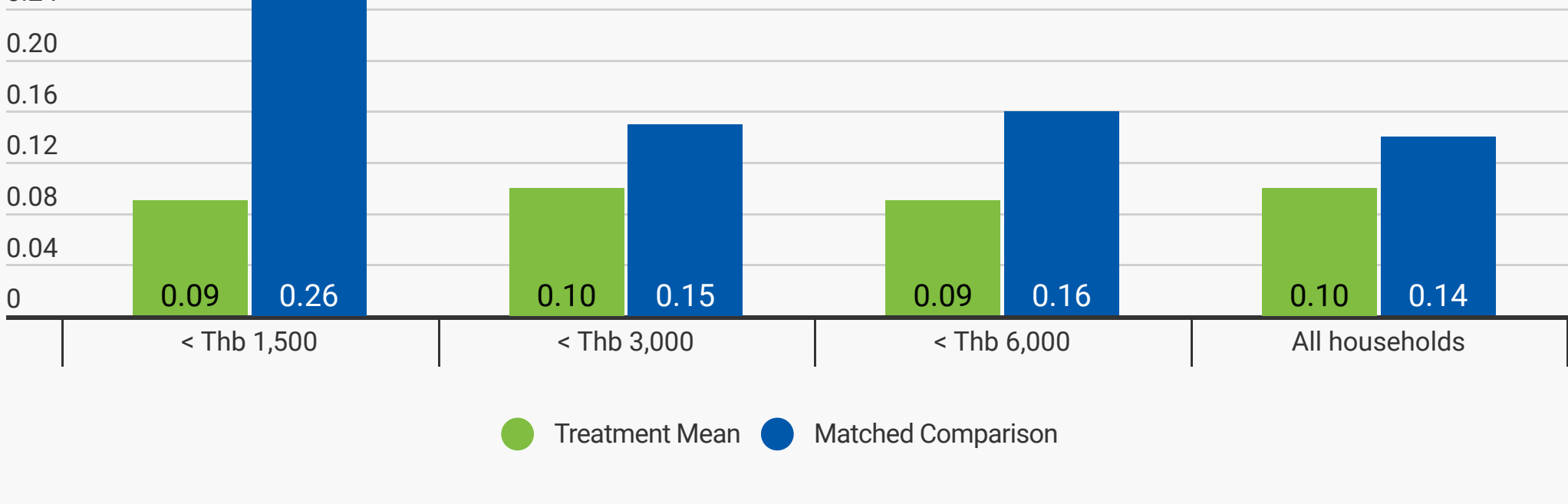
The CSG has...



The data below shows that the CSG resulted in positive impacts in three main areas: (1) nutrition, (2) access to post natal services and (3) women's empowerment.

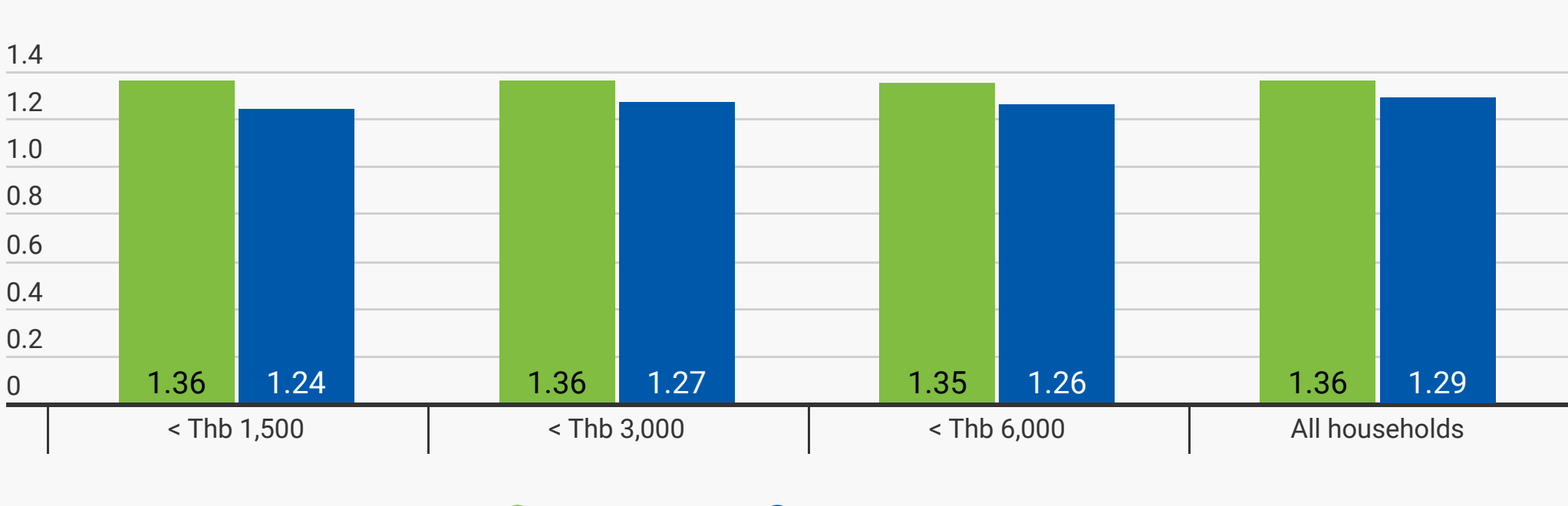
Resulted in better nutritional outcomes

Children in households receiving the CSG faced a lower risk of wasting compared to children in similar households not receiving the grant, and this effect is statistically significant across all the relevant sub-samples.



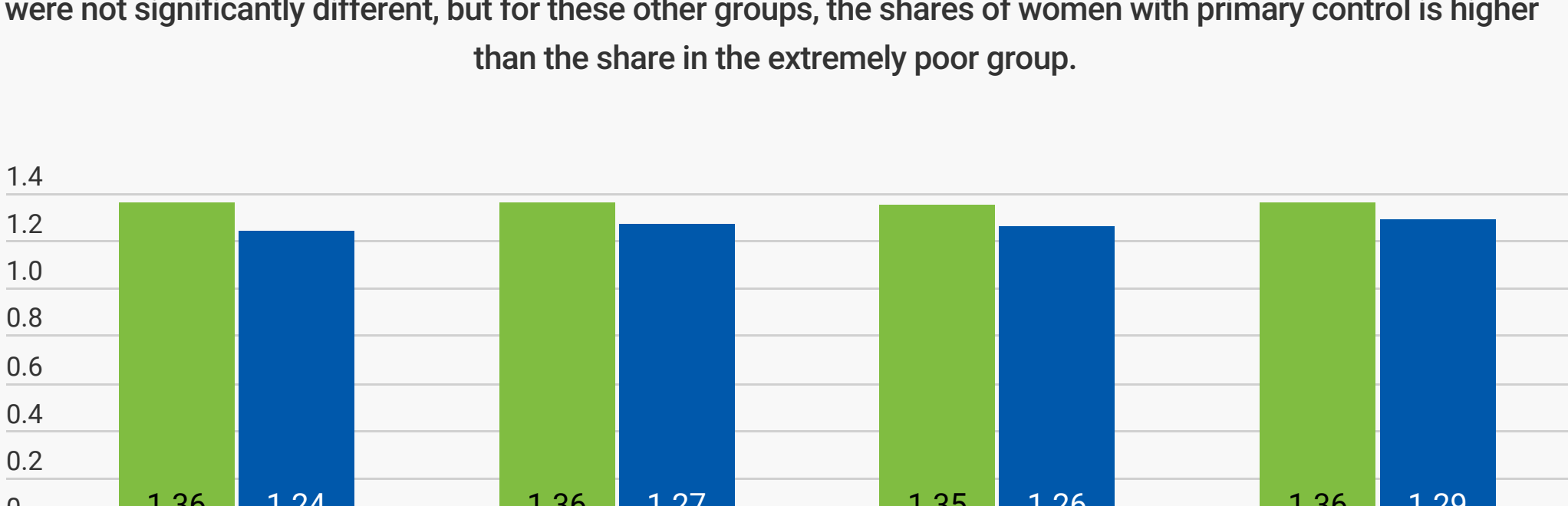
Resulted in better access to post natal services

Infants in households receiving the CSG accessed post-natal care more than comparable infants in similar households that did not receive the CSG. The effect is greatest in the extreme-poor households where the number of visits was 9% higher for infants receiving the grant compared to the matched comparison group and in the overlapping sub-sample of poor and near-poor households where the number of visits was 7% higher.



Women's empowerment

Mothers in extremely poor households receiving the CSG were more likely to be the primary decision-makers in food expenditure decisions and had more control over their income compared to mothers in similar extremely poor households that did not receive the CSG. The differences for other sub-samples and the whole sample were not significantly different, but for these other groups, the shares of women with primary control is higher than the share in the extremely poor group.



Key recommendations

1. Timing of the evaluation was critical to ensure the policy relevance of the generated evidence: at the adoption of the policy back in early 2015, UNICEF and partners established a longer term evaluation design and mechanism to monitor which ensured the national ownership from the very start.
2. Adequate and innovative human rights based design is important: quasi-experimental design was used instead of RCT to generate rigorous evidence while taking rights-based approach and stick to the HRB approach.
3. Communication of results to the right audiences was essential: formats of communication do matter for ensuring the full understanding of high level policy audience of the results and they predicated a careful choice of high level messages that avoid technicalities but still convey the right message.
4. Capitalising on the policy influence of the CSG impact evaluation to promote country-led evaluations: The evidence generation and expansion of policy has been used to showcase the importance of impact evaluation in the country that can be applied to other programmes and policies.

The rigorous evidence generated from impact evaluation, combined with the high-level advocacy, led to a landmark cabinet decision to expand the Child Support Grant in two ways:

1. To expand the age group from children under three to under six
2. Increase the annual income threshold from 36,000 Baht to 100,000 Baht.

While nearly 1.1 million children as of February 2019 were benefitting from the grant, once fully implemented, the scheme will cover almost 1.8 million children by 2024. The decision also marks an important milestone to progressively realize the universal right of all children to have the best start in life, by providing income security to their families. It is worth noting that the CSG is funded by the Royal Thai Government with, so the investment in research has leveraged over 100 million USD for the fiscal year 2019.

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