

More Care for Young Children Project

Influencing
Strategy Report



Kementerian
Kependudukan
dan Pembangunan
Keluarga/BKKBN



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This report was prepared by Mega Indrawati (NINOS Foundation) on behalf of the National Coalition of Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Development.

1. Executive Summary

Purpose and Scope of the Influencing Strategy Documentation

This Influencing Strategy brief documents how the MORECare4YoungChildren (MC4YC) project supported the National Coalition for Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Development (NC HI ECD) to translate locally grounded parenting practice into policy, systems, and social-norm change in Indonesia. Implemented in partnership with BKKBN and ARNEC, the project positioned responsive caregiving and father engagement not as stand-alone innovations, but as integral elements of Indonesia's national parenting framework.

Covering the period 2024–2025, the brief synthesises verified project documents, monitoring data, and stakeholder interviews from urban Depok City (West Java) and rural Timor Tengah Utara/TTU (East Nusa Tenggara). Its purpose is threefold: (i) to explain how influencing was operationalised through delivery, (ii) to highlight concrete contributions to policy, systems, and practice, and (iii) to distil lessons and priorities for future advocacy led by NC HI ECD and partners.

Key Findings and Highlights

Influencing Embedded in Delivery and Routine Systems

Under MC4YC, influencing did not take the form of isolated advocacy campaigns. Instead, it was embedded within routine implementation and coordination processes from the outset. Baseline assessments were used to contextualise BKB EMAS modules and facilitation strategies, ensuring relevance across diverse urban and rural settings. As implementation progressed, delivery evidence including attendance records, session observations, photos, and facilitator notes; became the primary basis for engagement with local governments and BKKBN counterparts.

This embedded approach shifted dialogue away from abstract commitments toward practical questions of feasibility and system fit. At community level, cadres and local leaders legitimised shared caregiving practices through everyday interaction. At sub-national level, routine accompaniment enabled district actors to assess continuation and adaptation. At national level, NC HI ECD and ARNEC worked with BKKBN to connect pilot-site learning with existing parenting systems, particularly BKB EMAS, rather than proposing parallel initiatives.

Evidence and Relationships as Drivers of Influence

Influence under MC4YC was driven by the combination of credible evidence and trusted relationships. Delivery data provided tangible proof that father engagement and responsive caregiving were feasible within existing systems, while cadres, PLKB/PKB officers, village leaders, and faith-based actors functioned as intermediaries who translated evidence into local acceptance.

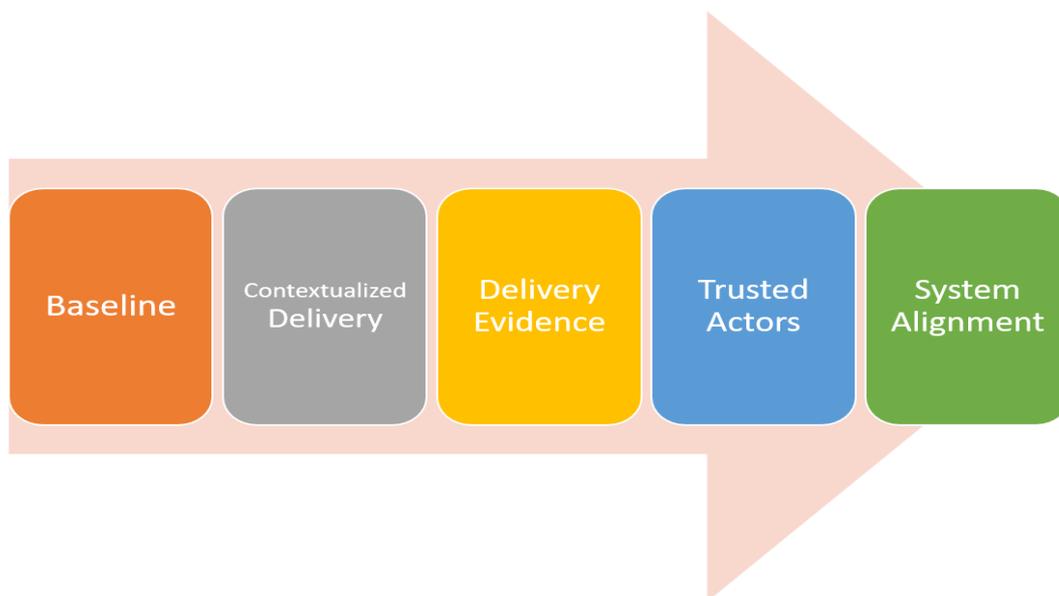
This relational pathway was particularly important in decentralised contexts, where institutional decisions are shaped by observed practice and social legitimacy. By grounding advocacy in lived delivery experience and channelling it through trusted local actors, MC4YC enabled evidence to travel upward; from households and communities to district coordination forums and

national policy discussions; without triggering resistance associated with externally driven advocacy.

Delivery Experience as an Entry Point for Influence

Level	Entry Point	Influencing Focus
Community	Parenting sessions, cadres, village & faith leaders	Participation and social norms
Sub-national	Routine coordination, accompaniment	Feasibility and continuation
National	Alignment with BKKBN systems	Policy and programme coherence

MC4YC’s influencing pathway shows how locally generated evidence, translated through trusted relationships, informed system alignment within existing government parenting frameworks.



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Contributions to Policy, Systems, and Parenting Practices

As a result, MC4YC contributed to change across three interconnected domains. At policy and programme level, principles of responsive caregiving and father engagement were reflected in the revision and pilot testing of the BKB EMAS guideline, strengthening its behavioural focus. Formal collaboration between NC HI ECD and BKKBN further consolidated coordination on parenting and family-development agendas.

At system and institutional level, district and village actors increasingly treated BKB EMAS sessions as part of routine service delivery. In several locations, local governments began

referencing BKB EMAS within planning and budgeting discussions, signalling early steps toward sustainability beyond project funding.

At community level, the project contributed to observable shifts in parenting practice and social norms. Across pilot sites, fathers accounted for 23% of total participants, with increased engagement in play, learning, and caregiving activities—often reinforced through public endorsement by village and faith leaders.

Influence Emerged Through Continuous Practice–Policy Interaction

MC4YC demonstrates that influencing in Indonesia’s decentralised context is most effective when delivery, relationships, and systems alignment converge. Sustainable influence emerged not from high-profile policy events, but from continuous interaction between practice and policy, where local evidence was translated through trusted actors and embedded within existing government structures. This approach reduced resistance, strengthened ownership, and created a credible pathway from pilot implementation to national uptake.

Priorities for Scaling and Institutionalisation

The experience documented in this brief points to clear priorities for future advocacy: institutionalising responsive caregiving and father engagement within national and sub-national planning frameworks; strengthening cross-sector integration with health, education, and child protection; securing diversified financing; and positioning nurturing care as part of Indonesia’s broader resilience agenda amid economic, environmental, and social change.

Together with the Delivery Approach brief, this Influencing Strategy brief presents a coherent picture of how MC4YC moved from *implementation* to *influence* within Indonesia’s family-development ecosystem.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background and Context

The MORECare4YoungChildren (MC4YC) project responds to growing concerns that young children and families are increasingly affected by intersecting crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate stress, and environmental degradation. In this context, nurturing care and responsive caregiving are not only developmental imperatives, but also resilience strategies that help families cope with prolonged social and economic pressure.

In Indonesia, MC4YC aligns with national priorities to improve early childhood development and reduce stunting through the Bina Keluarga Balita (BKB) programme under the National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN). The project builds on the BKB EMAS model, which provides structured parenting support during the first 1,000 days of life. However, while BKB EMAS has been widely implemented, male participation and gender-transformative caregiving have remained limited in practice.

MC4YC addresses this gap by piloting adaptations of BKB EMAS in two contrasting settings that is in urban Depok City (West Java) and rural Timor Tengah Utara/Kefamenanu (East Nusa Tenggara); with a deliberate focus on father engagement, community legitimacy, and multi-stakeholder coordination. At the regional level, the project reflects ARNEC's commitment to playful parenting and responsive caregiving, operationalising its Theory of Change through locally grounded pathways that connect households, communities, institutions, and policy systems.

2.2 Project Overview

Implemented jointly by ARNEC and the National Coalition for Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Development (NC HI ECD), with support from the UBS Optimus Foundation, the Indonesia component of MC4YC aimed to strengthen responsive caregiving and father engagement by linking parenting practice, community delivery systems, and national policy processes.

Between 2024 and 2025, the project was implemented through pilot delivery in Depok City and Timor Tengah Utara (TTU). These sites were selected to test how parenting content anchored in BKB EMAS modules could be adapted across different socio-economic, cultural, and service-delivery contexts.

The project combined three interconnected strands implemented in parallel. First, parenting sessions were delivered at community level by trained cadres, supported by PLKB/PKB officers and local service platforms. Sessions emphasised responsive caregiving, shared parental roles, and early learning interactions, with adaptations in language, scheduling, and facilitation to reflect local realities.

Second, MC4YC invested in capacity strengthening and accompaniment for cadres and facilitators through training, mentoring, refresher activities, and routine reflection. Delivery learning was documented through monitoring records and progress reports, enabling iterative improvement rather than one-off implementation.

Third, delivery experience was intentionally linked to policy and system-level engagement. Evidence from pilot sites—such as participation data, facilitation practices, and observed caregiving shifts—was used in coordination meetings and dialogues with district governments, BKKBN offices, and national stakeholders. Rather than promoting parallel initiatives, engagement focused on aligning learning with existing parenting systems, particularly BKB EMAS.

Across these strands, delivery evidence functioned as the main bridge between practice and policy, embedding influence within routine coordination and planning processes.

2.3 Policy and Institutional Anchors

MC4YC is grounded in formal institutional partnerships. The Memorandum of Understanding between ARNEC and NC HI ECD (July 2024–December 2025) establishes a collaborative framework for implementing evidence-based behavioural change interventions and pathways for scale. Complementing this, the Cooperation Agreement (PKS) between BKKBN and NC HI ECD formalises technical collaboration on parenting education and communication for behaviour change.

These agreements cover the development and delivery of parenting communication materials, pre- and post-programme assessments, adaptation of the BKB EMAS guidance, and research to document behavioural outcomes. Together, they position MC4YC not merely as a pilot, but as an institutional bridge linking community-level innovation with the national parenting system.

2.4 Purpose of the Documentation

This report documents the influencing strategy of MC4YC in Indonesia, examining how evidence generation, partnerships, and embedded advocacy contributed to policy, systems, and practice change related to responsive caregiving, gender-transformative parenting, and male participation.

Drawing on project documents, monitoring data, and stakeholder interviews, the report maps influencing approaches and entry points, identifies key enablers and challenges, and distils lessons to inform future advocacy. It also generates forward-looking recommendations for scaling and sustaining nurturing care within Indonesia’s early childhood and stunting-reduction frameworks, contributing to ARNEC’s regional learning agenda.

3. Methodology

3.1 Overall Design

The documentation of the MC4YC Influencing Strategy applies a qualitative, multi-layered design that combines implementation evidence, partnership experience, and advocacy practice across the project period. In line with the Inception Report, the approach emphasises triangulation across community, sub-national, and national levels to understand how influencing occurred and why certain strategies contributed to policy and systems change.

Rather than measuring impact, the methodology focuses on influencing processes; including evidence generation, actor engagement, enablers, and constraints; to generate practical lessons for institutionalisation and scale-up within Indonesia's family-development system.

3.2 Data Sources and Methods

The analysis draws on three complementary sources of evidence. First, a document review mapped implementation progress, influencing milestones, and system-level engagement, drawing on project plans, partnership agreements, the Inception Report, the logframe, progress reports (March–September 2025), monitoring data from Depok and TTU, and national and regional updates.

Second, semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with project manager and officers, sub-national government representatives, BKKBN district offices, village leaders, and community cadres. Interviews explored delivery experience, alignment with national priorities, community acceptance, and observed system responses.

Third, triangulation and validation were applied by cross-checking findings across documents and interviews. Draft interpretations were shared informally with ARNEC and the NC HI ECD to verify factual accuracy and refine system-level explanations.

3.3 Analytical Framework

Analysis followed five interconnected dimensions referenced in the Inception Report. Influencing processes were examined through an implementation-research lens, while results were assessed using OECD DAC criteria with attention to effectiveness, contribution to policy and systems change, and sustainability. A realist perspective helped identify contextual mechanisms shaping success or resistance. Lessons were derived through thematic analysis, and recommendations were informed by knowledge-to-policy approaches. Data were coded inductively and consolidated across sources to build a coherent influencing pathway.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

All interviews were voluntary and conducted with informed verbal consent. No personal identifiers are included. The documentation complies with ethical provisions in the ToR and consultant contract including safe guarding policy.

3.5 Limitations

This documentation reflects changes observed within an 18-month implementation period, capturing early shifts in institutional practice and community behaviour rather than long-term outcomes. Differences between urban Depok and rural Kefamenanu, including infrastructure, digital access, and socio-cultural norms, also limit direct comparison and require contextual interpretation.

4. Influencing Strategy: Approach & Design

4.1 Positioning of the Influencing Strategy

Within MC4YC Indonesia, influencing was deliberately positioned as an extension of delivery rather than a parallel advocacy track. Influencing moments were embedded within routine implementation, coordination, and reflection processes, based on early experience that government counterparts responded more positively to concrete delivery evidence than to abstract policy arguments.

As the project manager explained, “When we talked to government, we did not start with policy. We started with what actually happened in the sessions,” – Lucy Herny, Project Manager. Delivery experience from Depok and TTU thus functioned as proof that responsive caregiving and father engagement were feasible, adaptable, and acceptable within existing systems, particularly BKKBN’s BKB EMAS programme.

4.2 Influencing Levels and Entry Points

Influencing work under MC4YC operated across three interconnected levels namely community, sub-national, and national with different entry points at each level.

At the community level, influence centred on participation and social norms. Cadres played a central role not only as facilitators, but also as trusted messengers who legitimised shared caregiving practices. Their work was reinforced by village leaders and faith-based actors who provided public endorsement and helped normalise fathers’ participation. In TTU, community engagement was often embedded in existing social structures. As one village head described, “We used church and village meetings so families could join without extra travel,” – Dedi Tahoni, Village Head, Oabikase (TTU).

Influencing Levels and Entry Points in MC4YC Indonesia



At the sub-national level, influencing occurred through routine coordination and accompaniment with district governments and BKKBN offices. Officials engaged with delivery evidence such as attendance records, session observations, and emerging participation patterns; to assess feasibility and relevance for local systems. In Depok, a sub-district official

noted that observed father participation shifted their perception of what was possible: *“We saw that fathers actually came. That made us think this program is possible to continue,”* – Titin Sumarsih, Sub-district Official, Depok.

At the national level, NC HI ECD and ARNEC worked with BKKBN to connect learning from pilot sites to national parenting priorities. Engagement at this level focused on program coherence and guideline alignment, using delivery experience to inform discussions rather than proposing new policy instruments.

4.3 Influencing Through an Evidence-to-Influence Pathway

MC4YC’s influencing strategy followed an evidence-to-influence pathway, in which learning from the field was intentionally generated, translated, and embedded into decision-making processes at multiple levels.

Influencing began prior to delivery through a baseline assessment designed to understand local caregiving practices, gender norms, and implementation constraints. Baseline findings were used to contextualise the BKB EMAS modules and training approach, ensuring relevance to both urban Depok and rural Timor Tengah Utara (TTU). This early use of evidence positioned the project as responsive rather than prescriptive. As one project officer explained, *“The baseline helped us explain to government why some adaptations were needed before implementation,”* – Vincent Kia Beda, Project Officer, TTU.

As implementation progressed, delivery evidence became the primary influencing tool. Monitoring data, pre- and post-session assessments, photos, and facilitator notes from Depok and TTU were systematically used in coordination meetings and workshops. This shifted engagement with government and partners away from abstract commitments toward concrete discussions on feasibility and adaptation. A project officer in TTU noted, *“We used photos and session notes to explain, not presentations,”* – Project Officer, TTU.

Evidence was then translated through trusted relationships. Cadres, PLKB/PKB officers, village heads, and faith-based leaders played a central role as intermediaries between families and institutions. Their social proximity and legitimacy were particularly important in engaging fathers, where external messaging often faced resistance. As one cadre reflected, *“If cadres invite them, fathers come. If outsiders invite them, they hesitate,”* – Udis Bana, BKB Cadre, TTU.

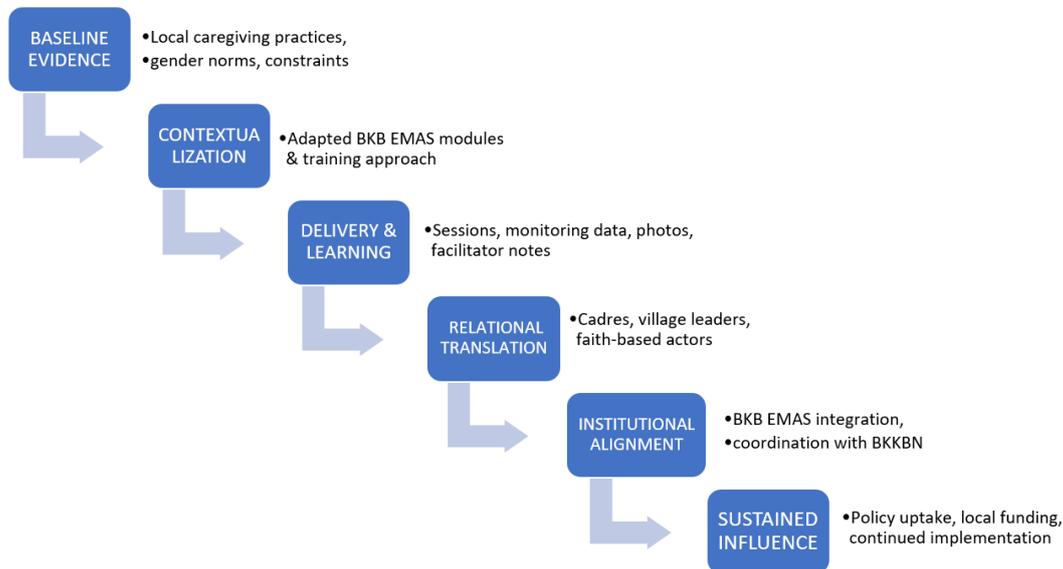
At the national level, institutional alignment guided influencing efforts. Rather than advocating parallel initiatives, MC4YC focused on integrating responsive caregiving and father engagement within existing BKKBN systems, particularly BKB EMAS. Delivery experience from pilot sites was used as a reference point for alignment discussions, reinforcing coherence with national priorities. A national stakeholder confirmed this approach: *“The discussion was about how to fit this into BKB EMAS, not creating something new,”* – Lucy Herny, Project Manager.

Finally, visibility and learning exchange reinforced credibility and extended influence beyond pilot sites. Lessons from Depok and TTU were shared through national meetings and workshops, digital communication, and ARNEC regional learning forums, positioning Indonesia’s experience as both nationally relevant and regionally instructive.

This figure illustrates how MC4YC’s influencing strategy was embedded within implementation. Influence began with baseline evidence to contextualise delivery, evolved through iterative

learning and trusted relationships, and informed institutional alignment within BKKBN's BKB EMAS system. Rather than standalone advocacy, influence emerged through continuous interaction between practice and policy.

Evidence-to-Influence Pathway under MC4YC Indonesia



As illustrated above, MC4YC’s influencing pathway moved from baseline evidence and contextualised delivery toward relational translation and institutional alignment; the following section shows how this pathway was enacted through routine implementation rather than standalone advocacy activities.

4.4 Influencing Actions Embedded in Implementation

Influencing actions were embedded within day-to-day implementation, not delivered as standalone advocacy events. Baseline findings informed revisions to session sequencing, facilitation methods, and engagement strategies before and during delivery, creating a continuous feedback loop between evidence and action.

This embedded approach reduced resistance and enabled incremental institutional engagement, supporting early system uptake and policy dialogue.

Delivery evidence was regularly brought into coordination forums, while public endorsement by village and faith leaders was integrated into

Evidence-to-Influence in Practice

MC4YC demonstrates that effective policy influence does not require new policy instruments or large advocacy campaigns. Instead, it shows that:

- **Start with contextual evidence:** Baseline assessments help explain *why* adaptation is needed and build early legitimacy.
- **Use delivery as proof:** Monitoring data and real-world practice are more persuasive than abstract proposals.
- **Work through trusted actors:** Cadres, local leaders, and faith-based figures translate evidence into acceptance.
- **Embed influence in routine systems:** Continuous engagement during implementation reduces resistance and supports gradual institutional uptake.

For policymakers, this approach offers a practical pathway to integrate responsive caregiving and father engagement within existing family-development systems—linking local practice directly to sustainable policy and programme reform.

community events. A project officer in Depok summarised this dynamic: “*Advocacy happened while implementing. There was no separate advocacy event,*” – Pandji W., Project Officer, Depok.

4.5 Verifiable Results of Influencing Work

Influencing efforts contributed to early and verifiable results across policy, systems, and practice.

At policy level, responsive caregiving and father engagement were incorporated into the revised BKB EMAS guideline, acknowledged by national counterparts: “*Father involvement is now clearly mentioned in the guideline,*” – BKKBN Official.

At system level, collaboration between NC HI ECD and BKKBN was formalised through MoU and PKS, and sub-national governments began referencing BKB EMAS in coordination and planning discussions. In TTU, village leaders discussed resource commitments: “*We discussed using village funds for continuing sessions,*” – Village Head, TTU.

At practice level, monitoring data documented participation by 443 parents and caregivers, supported by 51 trained cadres, with male participation reaching 23% across sites. Cadres observed tangible shifts: “*Before, only mothers came. Now some fathers stay until the end,*” – Sri Suyanti, BKB Cadre, Depok.

4.6 Linking Delivery and Influence

The Influencing Strategy functioned as a direct continuation of the Delivery Approach. Delivery generated evidence and credibility, while influencing translated that evidence into institutional engagement and early system uptake. Together, the two components illustrate a coherent implementation-to-influence pathway, linking household-level parenting practice with sub-national and national systems.

5. Challenges and Enablers

5.1 Overview

The MC4YC influencing strategy was shaped by a dynamic interaction between political commitment, community ownership, and system constraints. Implementation in urban Depok and rural Timor Tengah Utara (TTU) revealed that influence was enabled where institutional alignment and local legitimacy converged, and constrained where capacity gaps, cultural norms, and funding uncertainty persisted. This section synthesises the key limiting and enabling factors affecting the translation of influence into sustained practice.

5.2 Key Challenges

Across sites, uneven cadre capacity and resource constraints remained a persistent challenge. In TTU, some cadres continued to find the BKB EMAS modules dense and technical, requiring repeated briefings and local-language explanation. As noted by the project officer, “*Some cadres still found the BKB EMAS modules too dense and technical,*” – Vincent Kia Beda, Project Officer, TTU.

In Depok, while confidence levels were higher, cadres with limited facilitation experience required frequent refreshers, and many volunteers covered transport and session costs themselves. *“Sometimes we buy gifts for participants with our own money,”* – Sri Suyanti, BKB Cadre, Depok.

Cultural resistance to father roles also constrained progress. Patriarchal norms remained strong, particularly in rural areas, limiting the pace at which increased awareness translated into sustained behavioural change. As observed by BKKBN staff, *“Most men still believe child care belongs to women,”* – Isabela Maneak, BKKBN TTU. Even where sessions were rescheduled to weekends, participation gains were incremental. *“Cultural change takes longer than policy change,”* – Vincent Kia Beda, Project Officer, TTU.

Urban–rural disparities further shaped influencing pathways. Depok benefited from dense infrastructure and digital connectivity, while TTU faced geographic dispersion and limited communication access. *“Some villages had to use church bells to announce sessions because there was no signal,”* – Udis Bana, BKB Cadre, TTU. These disparities increased the cost and complexity of replication.

Finally, sustainability and funding uncertainty limited confidence in long-term continuation. While discussions on APBDes and BOKB allocations took place, formal commitments were uneven, and frequent leadership rotation disrupted continuity. *“Without a district by-law (Perbup), it is hard to sustain funding once projects end,”* – Vincent Kia Beda, Project Officer, TTU.

5.3 Key Enablers Supporting Influence

a. Political Will and System Commitment

Political endorsement emerged as a critical enabler. At national level, BKKBN leadership explicitly positioned father engagement as integral to BKB EMAS rather than as an external initiative. This commitment was reflected in the inclusion of gender-transformative content in the 2025 guideline revision and in formal collaboration with the NC HI ECD.

At sub-national level, local governments demonstrated ownership by allocating space, staff, and planning references for BKB EMAS activities. In Depok, this was articulated clearly: *“We already plan to insert BKB EMAS in next year’s kelurahan work plan,”* – Titin Sumarsih, Lurah Leuwinanggung, Depok.

In TTU, village leadership signalled budgetary intent. *“We have earmarked funds in the 2026 APBDes to support transport for cadres and parent meetings,”* – Dedi Tahoni, Village Head, Oabikase, TTU.



Village Head's Commitment – TTU

b. Cadre Networks and Peer Mentoring

A strong cadre ecosystem functioned as both a delivery and influencing asset. Cadres facilitated sessions, mobilised participation, and supported peer learning across neighbourhoods and villages. In Depok, cadres leveraged informal digital networks: “We created WhatsApp groups to remind parents and share videos. Cadres from other RW also join our sessions to learn,” – Sri Suyanti, BKB Cadre, Depok.

In TTU, peer mentoring took place through in-person preparation and reflection. “We practice together so no one is left behind,” – Udis Bana, BKB Cadre, TTU.



Digital Storytelling Content – Koalisi PAUD HI Social Media

c. Digital and Media Platforms

Digital engagement proved effective in urban and national advocacy. Between April and July 2025, the NC HI ECD’s Instagram account recorded more than 11,000 views and a 24 percent increase in followers, with short reels on father involvement serving as advocacy material in regional forums.

In TTU, where digital access was limited, the project combined traditional media—community banners and church announcements—with mobile messaging where possible. This hybrid approach maintained advocacy momentum despite infrastructure constraints.

d. Cultural and Faith-Based Legitimacy

Local culture and religion functioned as effective channels for normative change. Village and faith leaders reported using church sermons and customary meetings to communicate parenting messages. By embedding advocacy within faith practices, father engagement was framed as a moral and communal responsibility rather than a contested social agenda.

e. Alignment with National Agendas

Policy coherence with national priorities further strengthened influence. Alignment with stunting reduction efforts and the Gerakan Ayah Teladan Indonesia (GATIK) positioned MC4YC messages within the government’s own reform agenda. As one provincial BKKBN officer observed, “The father module of BKB EMAS fits perfectly with GATIK’s 2025 quick-win program on shared caregiving,” – Adila, BKKBN West Java.

5.4 Comparative Summary: Challenges vs. Enablers

Dimension	Challenges (What Limited Progress)	Enablers (What Worked)
Political and Institutional Environment	Frequent leadership rotation; absence of formal by-law support	High-level commitment from BKKBN and Koalisi; local integration into RKPD and APBDes plans
Human Resources and Capacity	Uneven cadre competence and limited incentives	Strong cadre networks, peer mentoring, refresher trainings
Socio-Cultural Norms	Persistent patriarchal beliefs restrict male participation	Faith-based messaging and community endorsement enhanced acceptance
Digital and Communication Systems	Limited internet access and digital literacy in rural sites	Effective urban social media campaign and multi-channel communication
Resource Mobilization	Funding gaps and uncertain allocations post-project	Use of BOKB and village funds for continuity
Policy Coherence	Competing priorities in sectoral plans and budget delays	Alignment with national stunting and GATIK agendas

6. Achievements and Results

6.1 Policy-to-Action and Systems Change

By late 2025, MC4YC had transitioned from a pilot initiative into a nationally recognised reference for integrating responsive caregiving and father engagement within BKKBN's BKB EMAS programme. Through joint technical reviews, BKKBN embedded father-engagement content and behavioural indicators into the revised 2025 BKB EMAS guideline, signalling a shift from experimentation toward institutional adoption.

At sub-national level, early system uptake was evident. In Depok, BKB EMAS was included in the Kelurahan Work Plan (RKPK), while in TTU several villages—including Oabikase—allocated APBDes funds to support cadre transport and learning materials. These commitments were closely linked to observed delivery performance. As noted by a project officer, *“Once village heads saw how cadres worked, they themselves requested to continue the sessions using village funds,”* – Vincent Kia Beda, Project Officer, TTU.



Community Commitment Banner Signing – Depok

Policy influence also extended across sectors. In Depok, BKB EMAS messages were integrated into Posyandu counselling, while in TTU, coordination between Dinas P2KB and the District Health Office linked responsive caregiving with stunting discussions. Together, these developments indicate early movement from project delivery toward system-embedded practice within Indonesia’s decentralised governance context.

6.2 Institutional Strengthening and Learning Systems

MC4YC strengthened institutional capacity primarily through cadre development and structured learning platforms. Between March and September 2025, 51 cadres (20 in Depok; 31 in TTU) completed core BKB EMAS training, supported by refresher sessions focused on facilitation and communication skills. Post-training assessments showed knowledge gains above 85 percent, alongside reported improvements in facilitation confidence.



Cadre Facilitation with Parents - Depok



Implementation Team Monthly Reflection - Depok

Implementation Teams (ITs) established in both regions functioned as local learning hubs, reviewing attendance data, behavioural observations, and logistical challenges on a monthly basis. Findings were shared with the NC HI ECD and through ARNEC’s regional learning platforms, supporting cross-site and cross-country knowledge exchange.

Digital platforms complemented in-person learning, particularly in urban contexts, enabling wider dissemination of parenting messages and cadre experiences beyond session participants.



MC4YC was presented in ARNEC Conference-Regional Learning Exchange – Manila 2025

6.3 Behavioral and Normative Change

Behavioural monitoring and interviews indicate measurable shifts in participation and caregiving practices. Across pilot sites, male participation reached approximately 23 percent, with increases observed in both Depok and TTU. As one cadre described, “At first only one or two fathers came. Now most sessions have several,” – Udis Bana, BKB Cadre, TTU.

Beyond attendance, interviews documented changes in household practices, including greater father involvement in play, feeding, bathing, and shared decision-making. Community acceptance improved where messages were framed through cultural and faith-based values. “When we connect parenting with the church’s message of love, everyone listens—even the men,” – Dedi Tahoni, Village Head, Oabikase (TTU).

While attribution to child-development outcomes cannot be isolated, observational reports noted improved early-stimulation practices and positive-discipline behaviours, consistent with the project’s behavioural pathways.



Fathers Learning Through Play – TTU



Father-Child Bonding at Home – Depok

6.4 Visibility and Advocacy Outputs

MC4YC generated a range of knowledge and advocacy outputs to support visibility and learning. Between March and October 2025, digital content reached over 11,000 views, while national and regional dissemination through meetings and workshops, ARNEC forums, and selected media outlets strengthened recognition of Indonesia as a proof of concept for gender-transformative parenting within government systems.

Results at a Glance

Change Domain	Concrete Result (2024–2025)	Systemic Significance
Policy	Revised BKB EMAS guidelines	Institutionalization the revised version of parenting BKB EMAS in national usage
Governance	Local inclusion of BKB EMAS in RPKK & APBDes plans	Early adoption of budgeted nurturing-care interventions at village level
Capacity	51 cadres trained and active peer-learning network established	Sustainable human-resource base for community-led ECD
Systems Learning	Transformed content of modules to social media platforms and integration into ARNEC Learning Group	Digital knowledge transfer and regional scaling pathway
Behavioral	23% average father participation in sessions; visible shared-care practices	Normative shift toward co-parenting within family units
Visibility and Advocacy	>11,000 social-media views, regional conference showcase	Increased recognition of Indonesia as regional leader on playful parenting

7. Lessons Learned

7.1 What Works in Influencing Strategies in Indonesia

Lesson 1 – Influence grows through relationships.

The MC4YC experience confirms that influencing strategies in Indonesia are most effective when grounded in trust-based relationships rather than one-off advocacy events. Policy influence did not emerge from formal policy briefings alone, but from sustained interaction between cadres, village leaders, district officials, and national counterparts, with the NC HI ECD acting as a critical bridge across levels.

This was clearly articulated by a project officer in TTU: “*Advocacy here doesn’t mean high-level meetings. It means connecting stories, data, and local champions so policies grow from what already works,*” – Vincent Kia Bada, Project Officer, TTU. In a decentralized governance context, where local credibility often outweighs formal directives, this finding reinforces that consistent accompaniment and co-production of evidence are more influential than isolated advocacy outputs.

Lesson 2 – Evidence becomes persuasive when translated into human stories.

Across both Depok and TTU, quantitative indicators such as attendance figures, knowledge gains, and father participation rates were important, but insufficient on their own. Decision-makers responded more strongly when data were presented alongside concrete behavioural narratives illustrating how parenting practices changed in everyday life.

This finding highlights that evidence-to-policy translation in Indonesia is most effective when humanized, especially within hierarchical bureaucratic cultures where empathy and social resonance shape acceptance. Numbers opened conversations; stories shifted positions.

Lesson 3 – Local adaptation turns pilot projects into living systems.

The success of the pilots in Depok and TTU was strongly linked to contextual flexibility. In TTU, parenting discussions were embedded into church gatherings and customary forums; in Depok, cadres used interactive games (such as Ular Tangga), WhatsApp reminders, and simple digital tools to sustain participation.

A village leader in TTU explained the importance of cultural mediation: “*When we link parenting messages with church values, everyone listens; even the men,*” – Dedi Tahoni, Village Head, Oabikase (TTU). These adaptations enabled communities to internalize gender-transformative messages without perceiving them as external or imposed. The lesson is clear: localization is not an add-on, but a precondition for sustainability.

Lesson 4 – Multi-level partnerships amplify reach and legitimacy.

MC4YC benefited from a tiered partnership structure involving ARNEC (regional), the NC HI ECD (national), BKKBN (policy anchor), and local governments (implementers). This configuration created a synchronized system of accountability and influence, allowing learning to move bottom-up and commitment to move top-down.

National recognition strengthened local legitimacy, while local success stories justified national scaling. The partnership with ARNEC further validated Indonesia’s experience internationally, demonstrating that regional learning platforms can reinforce domestic legitimacy by framing local innovation as global good practice.

Lesson 5 – Digital platforms democratize influence but need hybrid strategies.

Digital platforms emerged as an important advocacy amplifier. Between April and September 2025, the NC HI ECD’s Instagram audience grew significantly through father-focused reels and cadre storytelling. These platforms helped normalize men’s participation in parenting and extended advocacy reach beyond immediate project sites.

However, digital strategies were not universally accessible. As one cadre in TTU noted, “*In rural areas, the internet is not always there; sometimes we use church bells to announce sessions,*” – Udis Bana, BKB Cadre, TTU. This underscores the need for hybrid advocacy models that combine digital tools with analogue channels such as community radio, posters, and in-person

storytelling. Hybrid strategies also increased resilience during periods of limited travel or constrained budgets.

7.2 Integrative Reflection: How Influence Actually Worked

Taken together, the MC4YC experience shows that influencing in Indonesia is most effective when three pathways operate simultaneously and reinforce one another: relational, evidence-based, and adaptive innovation pathways.

Influencing Pathway	Key Mechanism	Empirical Evidence
Relational Pathway	Trust-based engagement, multi-level dialogue	BKKBN–Coalition partnership, cadre–village leader cooperation
Evidence Pathway	Humanized data and behavioral stories	Father participation visuals, narrative reporting from cadres
Innovation Pathway	Digital, cultural, and religious adaptations	Social media platforms, faith-based advocacy, interactive games

However, the key insight is not the existence of these pathways in isolation, but their convergence.

Relational trust created space for evidence to be heard. Evidence grounded discussions in feasibility and credibility. Adaptive innovation ensured that both relationships and evidence resonated with local realities. When one pathway weakened such as limited digital access in rural TTU then the others compensated through faith-based or relational channels.

This convergence explains why MC4YC’s influencing outcomes were not driven by high-profile policy events, but by everyday interactions: cadres demonstrating sessions to officials, village heads endorsing activities in community forums, and digital content circulating stories of fathers engaging with their children. National policy uptake, including revisions to BKB EMAS guidelines, emerged gradually from this accumulation of micro-level interactions rather than from a single advocacy moment.

In this sense, MC4YC illustrates a form of embedded influencing, where advocacy is inseparable from implementation. The implication for future advocacy is clear: influencing strategies should be designed not as parallel communication plans, but as learning systems that connect practice, people, and policy over time.

8. Recommendations for Future Advocacy

Building on the MC4YC influencing experience, future advocacy for responsive caregiving and father engagement in Indonesia should prioritise systemic mainstreaming over project-by-project expansion. Evidence from Depok and Timor Tengah Utara demonstrates that influence is most sustainable when anchored in existing government systems, supported by local legitimacy, and reinforced through continuous learning. Five strategic directions emerge to guide scale, sustainability, and resilience.

1. Scaling Through Learning-Oriented Replication

Future advocacy should support replication through Learning Districts for Responsive Caregiving under BKKBN leadership, with technical facilitation by the National Coalition of HI ECD and ARNEC. Drawing on the contrasting delivery experiences of urban Depok and rural TTU, these districts would function as demonstration and learning sites, rather than uniform roll-out locations.

Learning Districts can enable peer exchange among cadres and local governments, applied mentoring based on delivery practice, and the generation of short, experience-based policy notes. This approach allows scaling to proceed through evidence and adaptation, reflecting MC4YC's finding that credibility grows when policy actors can observe delivery in comparable contexts.

2. Institutionalisation Through Planning and Budgeting Systems

To ensure sustainability beyond donor funding, advocacy efforts should focus on embedding father engagement and responsive caregiving within formal planning and budgeting instruments. At sub-national level, this includes integrating measurable indicators such as father participation and cadre capacity into RPJMD and Renstra Dinas P2KB, aligning parenting outcomes with regional performance targets.

At national level, alignment with RPJMN 2025–2029 is essential, particularly under human development and stunting reduction priorities. Positioning father engagement as a performance-relevant component of BKKBN's family development mandate strengthens the link between political commitment and durable financing. As articulated by a local government leader, *"If BKB EMAS enters the RPJMD, then funding is secured because it becomes part of the regional target,"* – Titin Sumarsih, Lurah Leuwinanggung, Depok.

3. Strengthening Cross-Sector Integration

Findings from MC4YC confirm that parenting interventions gain traction when linked across sectors. Future advocacy should therefore promote structured integration between parenting, health, education, and child protection systems, building on pathways already tested during implementation.

Key entry points include integrating responsive caregiving indicators into Posyandu and Puskesmas monitoring alongside nutrition outcomes; embedding play-based parenting within PAUD Holistik Integratif (HI) and parent–teacher engagement; and linking positive parenting with child protection case management. These linkages position nurturing care as a shared system responsibility, rather than a standalone social programme.

4. Expanding Hybrid Advocacy and Learning Pathways

Digital platforms proved effective in amplifying messages and normalising father engagement, particularly through short videos and cadre storytelling. Future advocacy should expand digital learning and communication tools for cadres and facilitators, while maintaining hybrid approaches to ensure inclusion in low-connectivity settings.

Analog channels such as community meetings, faith gatherings, posters, and in-person storytelling remain essential in rural contexts. A hybrid advocacy model increases resilience during periods of limited mobility or constrained budgets, while preventing digital exclusion and reinforcing local legitimacy.

5. Framing Nurturing Care within a Resilience Agenda

Indonesia's families face interconnected pressures related to climate change, health shocks, food insecurity, and economic uncertainty. MC4YC demonstrates that parenting programmes can function as entry points for family resilience, linking emotional well-being, caregiving practices, and social support.

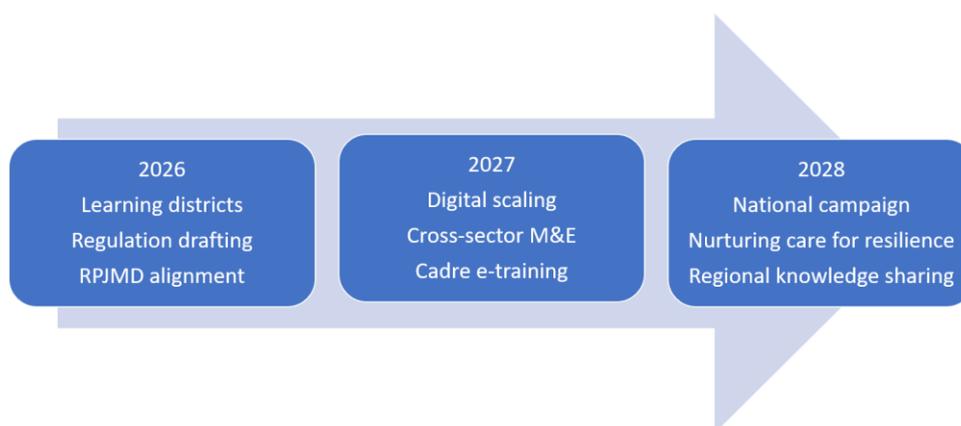
Future advocacy would benefit from a unifying frame: *"Nurturing Care for a Resilient Generation."* This framing positions responsive caregiving not only as a child-development intervention, but as a contribution to long-term human capital and community resilience that opening opportunities for cross-sector collaboration and diversified financing.

Concluding Reflection

The MC4YC experience shows that transforming caregiving norms in Indonesia is achievable when policy, culture, and community engagement converge. Influence proved most effective when embedded in relationships, grounded in delivery evidence, and reinforced through adaptive and culturally resonant strategies.

The strategic challenge ahead is no longer whether responsive caregiving and father engagement are effective, but how they are institutionalised as a public good. By prioritising system alignment, cross-sector integration, and resilience-oriented framing, future advocacy can move from pilot success toward sustained national impact.

Implementation Roadmap for Next Phase (2026–2028)



9. Conclusion

The MORECare4YoungChildren (MC4YC) project has made a clear and measurable contribution to strengthening Indonesia's nurturing care ecosystem by demonstrating how responsive caregiving and father engagement can be embedded within existing government systems. Through deliberate integration within BKKBN's Bina Keluarga Balita (BKB) EMAS

framework, the project shows that locally grounded delivery experience can inform policy alignment while remaining responsive to community realities.

By linking behavioural change at household level with institutional engagement at sub-national and national levels, MC4YC shifted what began as a pilot into a system-oriented innovation. Delivery evidence from Depok and Timor Tengah Utara (TTU) informed revisions to the BKB EMAS guideline, supported early local financing commitments through APBDes, and strengthened a cadre base of more than 50 facilitators who continue to promote shared caregiving practices beyond the project period.

At policy level, BKKBN's endorsement and alignment with the RPJMN 2025–2029 position responsive caregiving and father engagement within Indonesia's long-term human development agenda. This anchoring reinforces the role of parenting programmes not only as social interventions, but as contributors to national priorities on child development, stunting reduction, and family resilience.

Beyond Indonesia, MC4YC advances ARNEC's regional Theory of Change by illustrating that gender-transformative parenting is both a social-norm intervention and a practical resilience strategy in contexts shaped by economic uncertainty, environmental stress, and psychosocial pressures. The experience highlights three interrelated lessons with relevance for regional and global learning: sustainable change depends on localisation within existing systems and cultural structures; evidence is most influential when quantitative findings are combined with lived experience; and long-term impact is sustained through partnership across community, national, and regional levels.

Together, these insights position Indonesia's MC4YC experience as a credible reference point for future advocacy and learning on nurturing care, contributing to ARNEC's ongoing efforts to strengthen evidence-informed parenting systems across the region.