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IMPACT EVALUATION USAID/SOMA UMENYE ACTIVITY

AID-696-TO-16-00002

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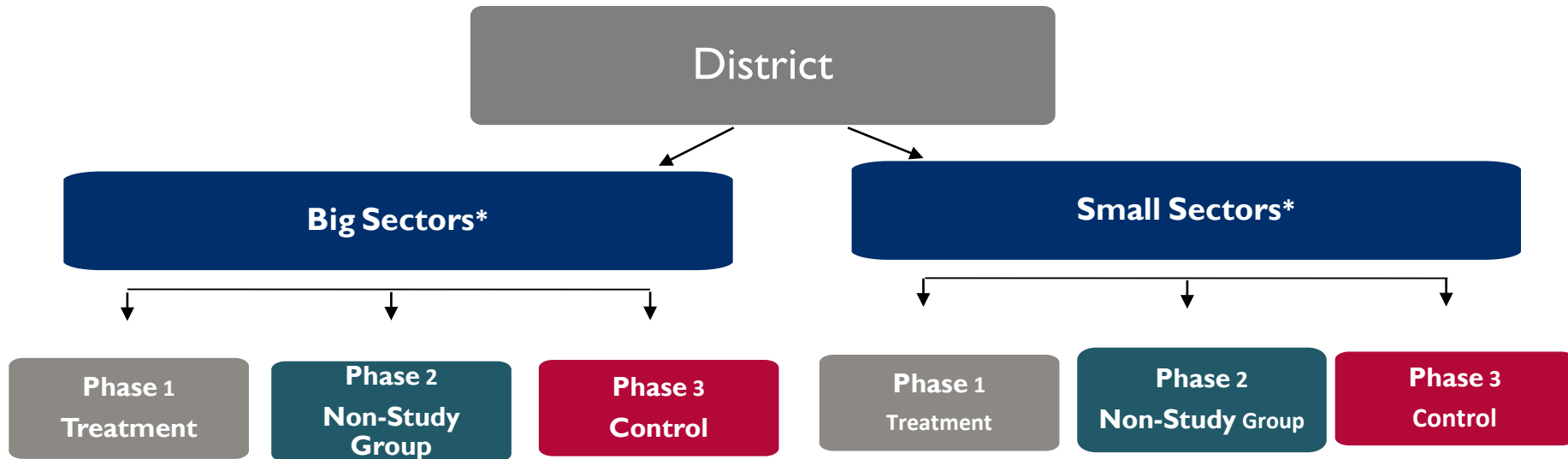
IMPACT EVALUATION QUESTIONS

- **1) To what extent are changes in Kinyarwanda reading outcomes for students in Grades 1-3 attributable to the Soma Umenye activity (as a package)?**
- **2) To what extent has classroom instruction changed as a result of Soma Umenye?**
- **3) What is the evidence that improved student reading outcomes in Kinyarwanda lead to improved opportunities for students to succeed in schooling?**
- **4) To what extent are the improvements in the systematic capacity for early grade reading instruction a result of the *Soma Umenye* activity?**



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*Big sectors have more than the average number of schools in the district. Small sectors have less than the average number of schools in the district.

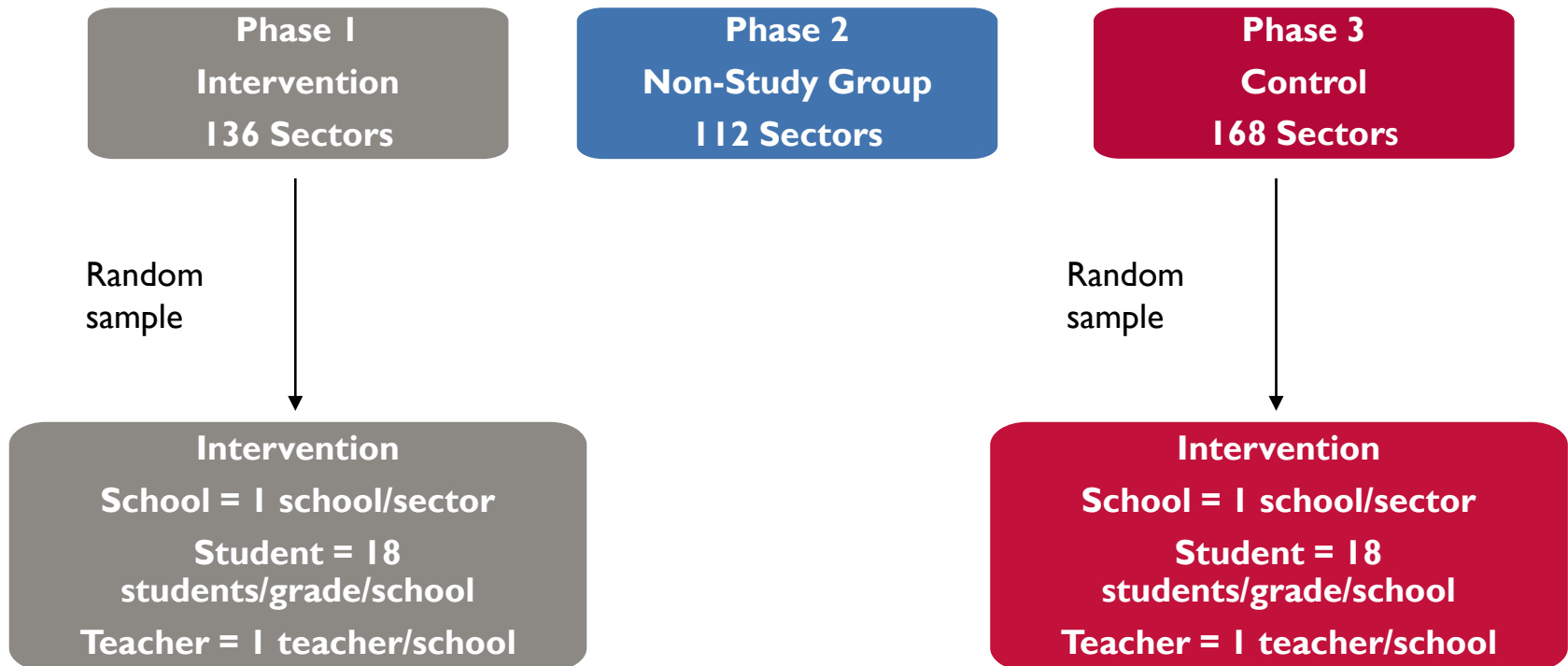
- **Sectors assigned to phases randomly**
 - In each district
 - In the presence of district officials and sector representatives



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Impact Evaluation Sampling





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What and How We Measured

- **PI reading skills measured by the EGRA adapted to speakers of Kinyarwanda and to Rwanda's educational scenario.**
- **Teacher instructional behavior in the Kinyarwanda class measured by the Lesson Observation Protocol.**



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Data Sources

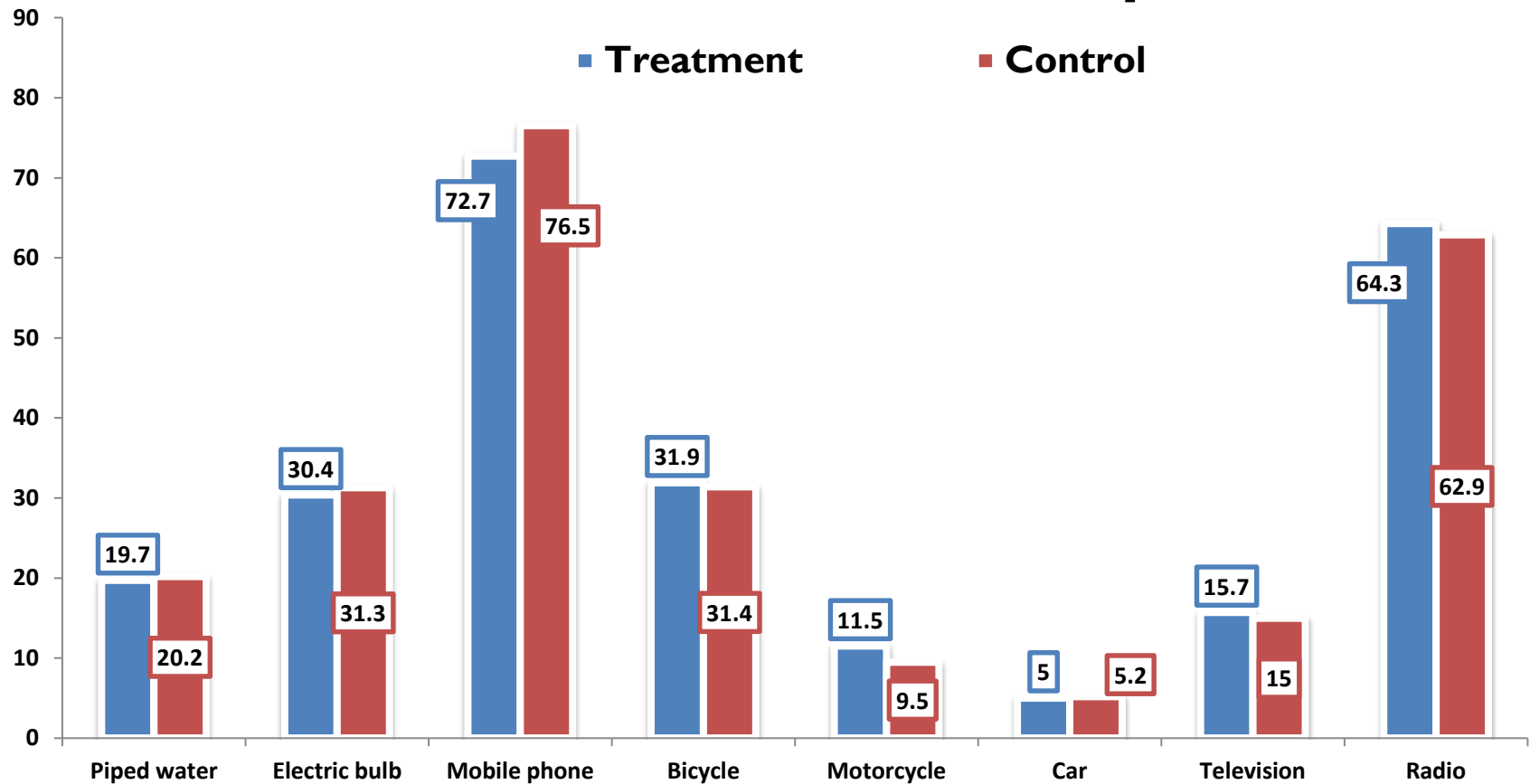
	TREATMENT	CONTROL	TOTAL
SCHOOLS	136	168	304
STUDENTS	2,455	3,011	5,466
MALES	1,229	1,523	2,752
FEMALES	1,226	1,488	2,714
HEAD TEACHERS	122	146	268
TEACHERS	132	155	287
LESSON OBSERV.	129	152	281



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Characteristics of the Sample

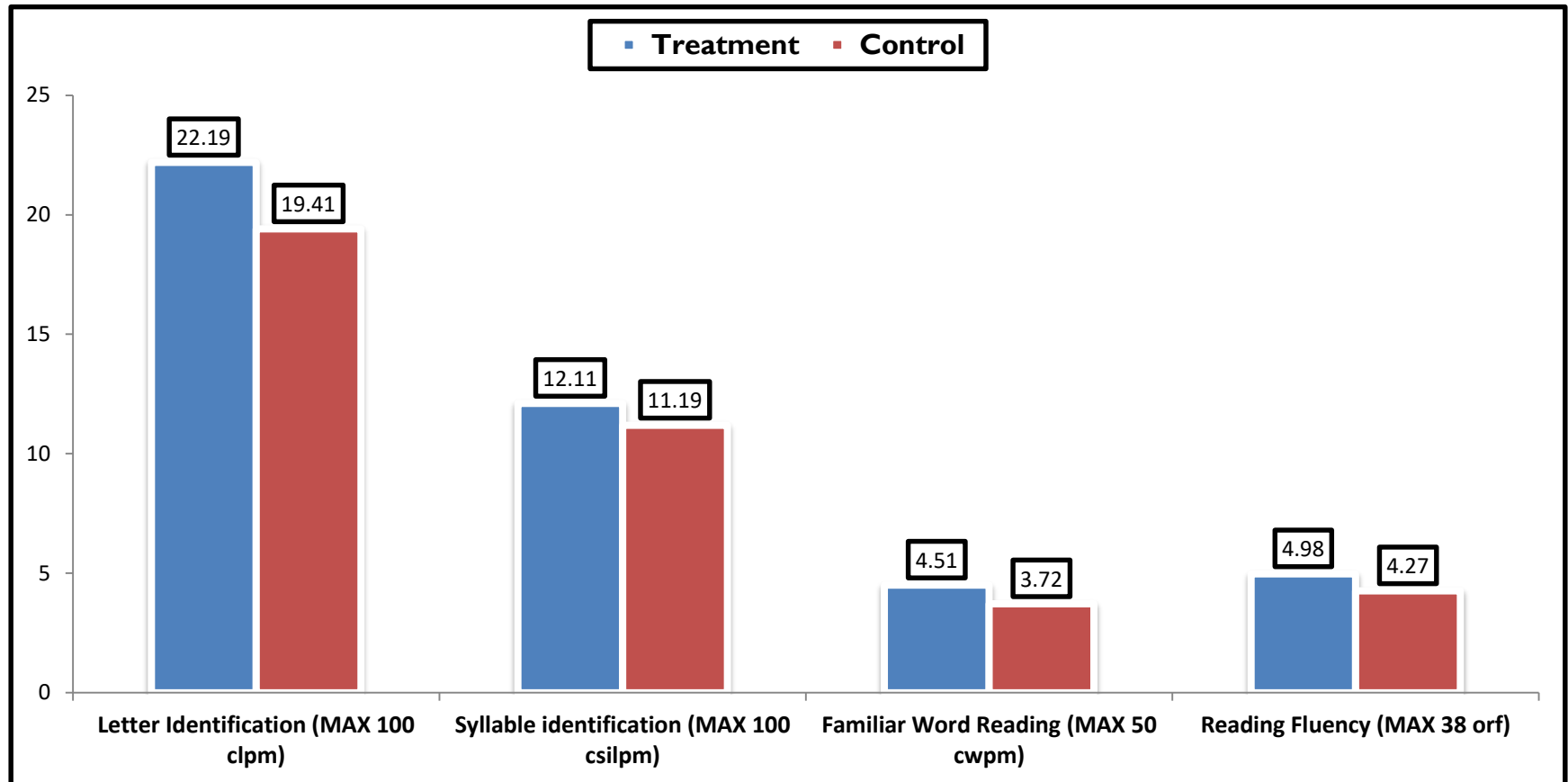




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EGRA Results: Timed Sub-tests

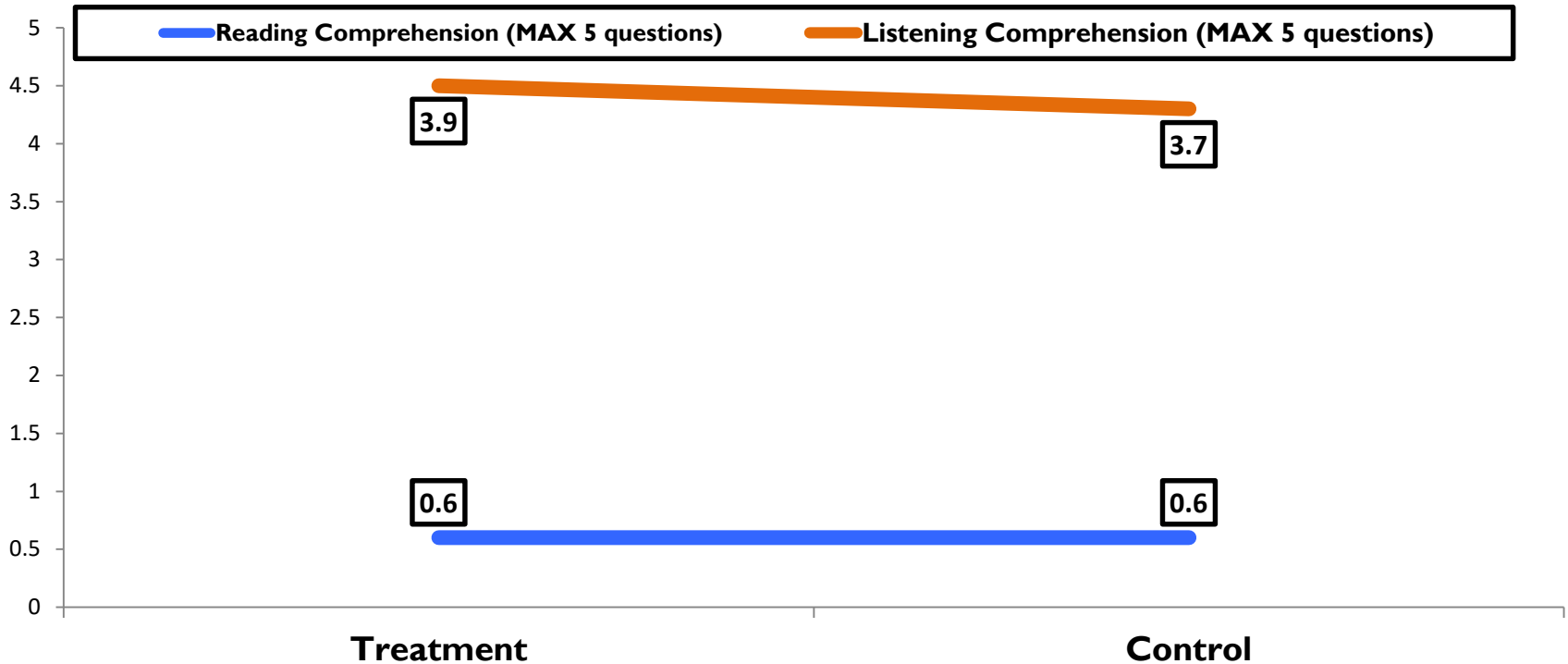




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EGRA Results: Untimed Subtests

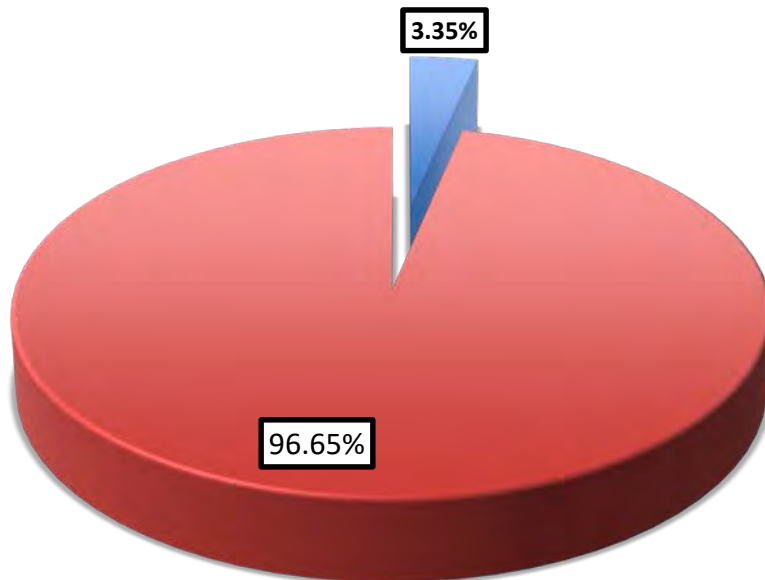




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Percentage of Proficient Readers



- 80% correct (183 students) correctly answered 4 out of 5 comprehension questions)
- Not proficient readers (5,274 students)

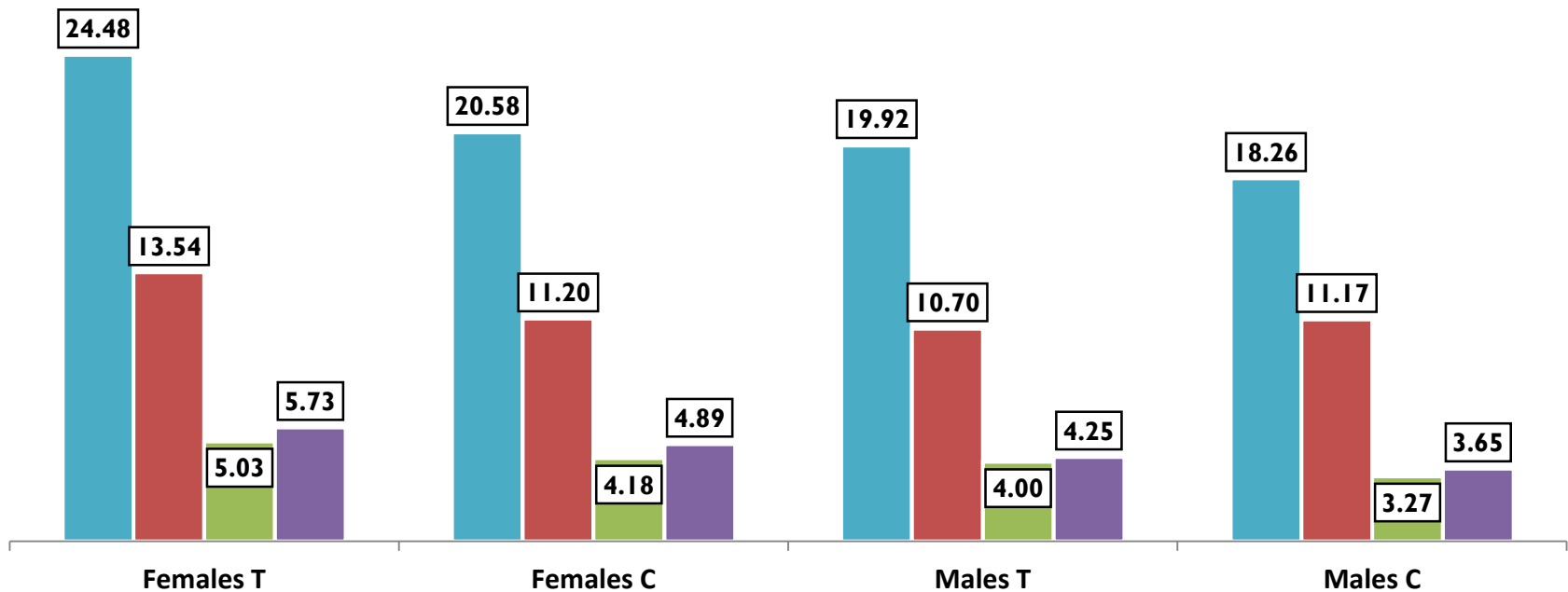


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Impact on Male and Female Students

■ clpm (max 100) ■ csilpm (max 100) ■ cfwpm (max 50) ■ orf (max 38)

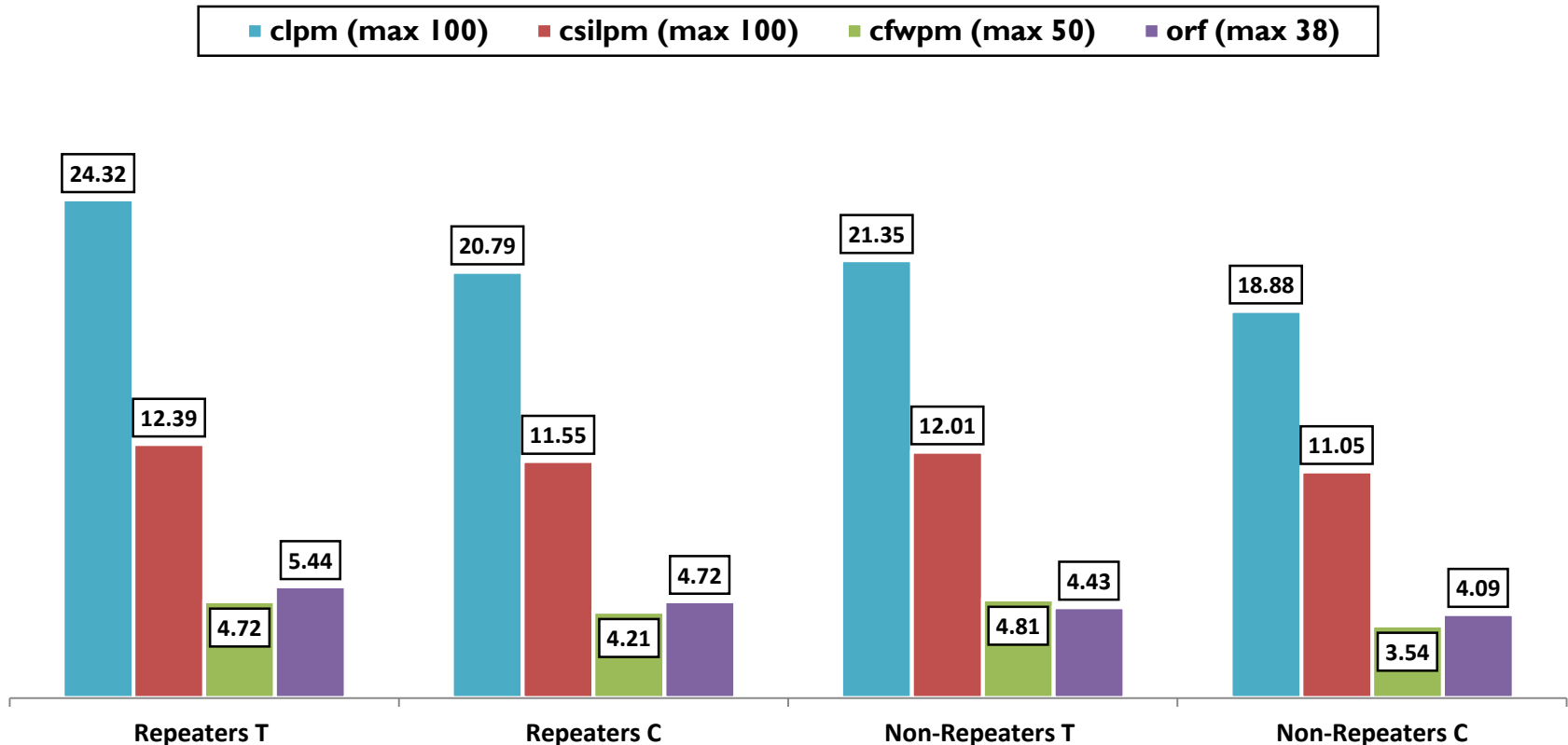




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Impact on Repeaters and Non-Repeaters

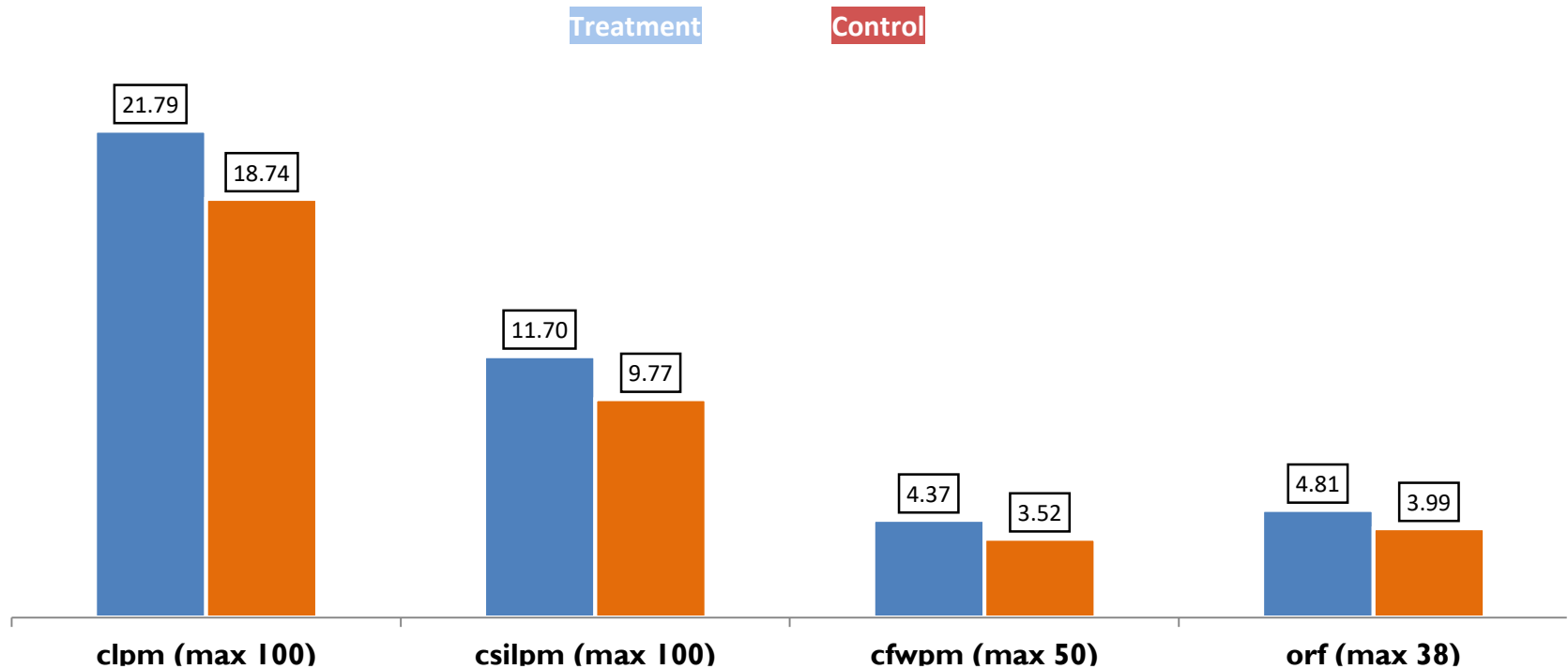




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Soma Umenye Impact on Rural Students





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IMPACT EVALUATION QUESTION # 2

**To what extent has classroom
instruction changed as a result of
Soma Umenye?**



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Lesson Observation Scores

Total lesson observation raw score	20.07	17.88	.45**
Lesson preparation raw score	3.01	3.02	.19
Teaching methodology raw score	5.5	5.34	.27
Literacy technical skills raw scores	4.28	4.23	.06
Assessment raw score	3.81	2.85	.96*
Use of teaching materials raw score	3.47	2.54	.92**



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DATA SUPPORTED CONCLUSIONS



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Participation in the Soma Umenye activity has the potential to cause PI students to improve their basic reading skills, particularly in letter and syllable recognition and familiar word reading.



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2

The number of words correctly read per minute in connected text was not sufficient to allow P I students to understand what they read. This is the key reason for the very low percentage of students able to answer the comprehension questions.



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3

Male and female students in treatment schools benefitted equally from the Soma Umenye activity and both groups scored higher than their counterparts in the control schools.



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4

One interpretation of the large concentration of scores at the upper limit of the distribution in the listening comprehension sub-test (average score of 3.91 out of a possible 4.0) is that even PI students who have not yet learned to decode have oral language, vocabulary, and comprehension skills that allow them to answer questions correctly. It is also possible that the sub-test was too easy and produced a ceiling effect.



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5

While participation in Soma Umenye may contribute to improved student academic achievement and/or improved efficiency down the road, no impact was observed in the rates of tardiness and absenteeism during the first year of implementation.



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6

The low scores on the EGRA sub-tests that measure pre-reading skills (on the average 20 letters recognized out of 100; 16 syllables out of 100; and fewer than five familiar words out of 50) suggest that students are not receiving sufficient focused classroom instruction and practice to master these skills and become fluent readers by the end of P3.

Fluent readers as defined by the EGRA Toolkit (2nd edition, March 2016) “Students are considered fluent readers if they read the entire passage in one minute or less and can answer 80 percent of the reading comprehension questions correctly.” (3.2 out of 4 questions in this particular case).



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7

It is encouraging that the instructional behavior of the 129 teachers who received Soma Umenye training was half a standard deviation higher than that observed for the 152 control teachers.



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8

Learning is limited by tardiness and the high rate of absenteeism. Over half of the PI students self-reported having been absent for at least one day the previous week – and by actual count against the class rosters, over 20 percent of enrolled students were absent the day their class was assessed.



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RECOMMENDATIONS



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1

In the early grades, especially in P I, focus on pre-reading or foundational skills—phonological awareness and alphabetic principles, coupled with practice in applying these skills to the decoding of syllables and words.



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2

Revisit the EGRA tool used to assess students' Listening Comprehension skills.



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3

Focus on early identification of slow or immature learners and provide extra assistance to avoid leaving students behind. The repetition rates observed at P I should be seen as unacceptable.



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4

Focus on pre-service training and on what future teachers are learning and practicing while still at teachers' preparation colleges. Large scale in-service training is not a sustainable model once project funds are no longer available.



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5

Make the development and implementation of benchmarks and reading standards for grades P1 – P3 a priority shared by students, teachers, head teachers and community members.



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**QUESTIONS
and
COMMENTS**