



Impact Evaluation: Prevention of sexual and physical violence against women in Burundi

Jeannie Annan, Ph.D., Director, Research & Evaluation, IRC

Karin Wachter, GBV Technical Advisor, IRC

Radha Iyengar, Ph.D., London School of Economics



Gender Based Violence and Economic Programs

- Higher household wealth related to less domestic violence
- Evidence on microfinance programs and DV is mixed
 - Reduced by 50% in South Africa (Pronyk et al., 2006)
 - Both higher and lower levels of IPV found in members of microfinance programs in Bangladesh (Vyas & Watts, 2008)
- Potential for partners to feel challenged by woman's increased income
- Most studies are cross-sectional therefore impact of economic programs is not well understood



Research Question

- Does combining a discussion group with a savings program **empower** women more than a savings program alone?
 - Increase household decision making?
 - Decrease domestic violence?

Burundian context

- Emerging from a long civil war
- Since 2002, around 500,000 refugees have returned to Burundi
- Program work suggests that GBV results from several inter-related factors:
 - Low socio-economic status of women
 - Acceptance that GBV is a part of family and community life
 - Low decision-making power of women
 - Failure of systems to protect women and prosecute violators
- Few support services are available to survivors of GBV





Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA)

- Self-selected groups of 15-25 members
- Autonomous, independent associations
- Each member saves (in the form of shares) at every meeting
- Loans are given to members from the savings of the group and are paid back with interest
- Members share-out at the end of the cycle and receive their savings plus interest earned



Advantages of VSLA

- Safe place to keep money
- Easy access to short-term individual loans of an appropriate size
- No collateral required
- 30%-40% return on savings
- Builds social cohesion
- Simple methodology, sustainable and easily replicated





The GBV prevention intervention: Discussion Groups (DGs)

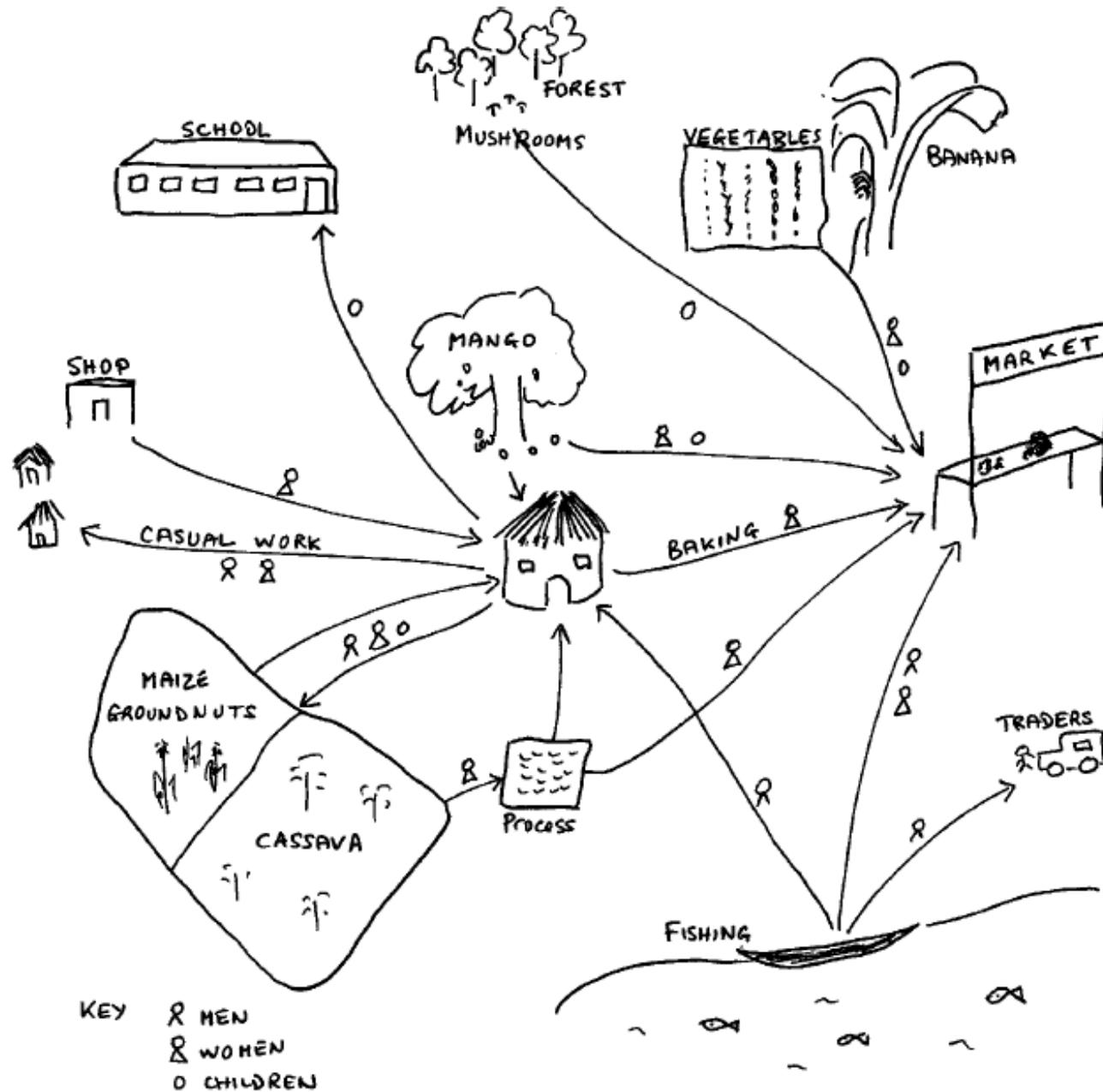
- Participants are the VSLA members *and* their spouses
- Using participatory methods, the DGs guided participants through a series of progressive themes with the goal of increasing women's participation in household decision-making in a culturally appropriate way





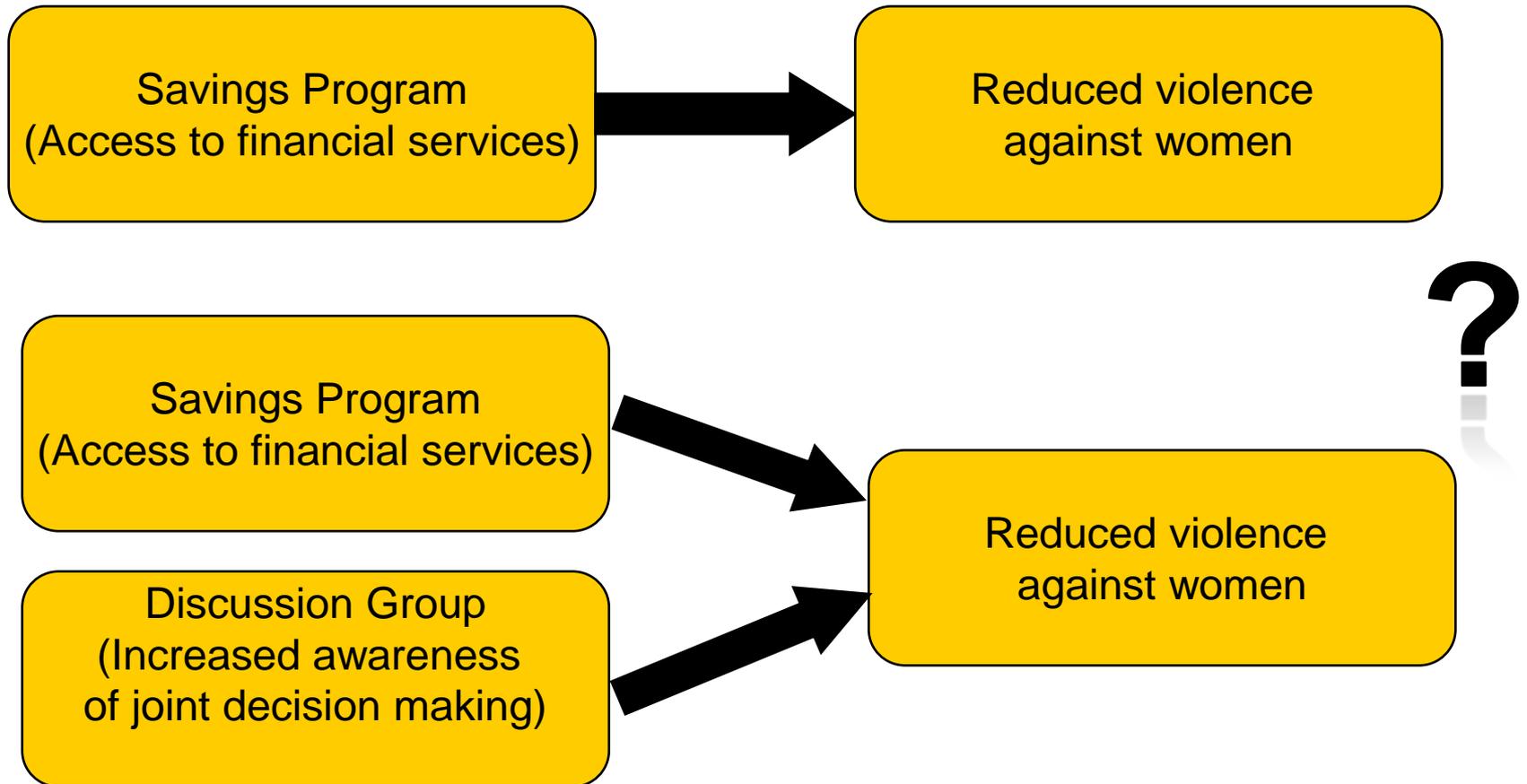
Discussion Group Themes

- DG1 • Introduction
- DG2 • Day-to-Day Life: the household economy
- DG3 • Household Cash Flows
- DG4 • Household Decisions on Spending
- DG5 • Major Purchases: planning and saving
- DG6 • Other Household Decisions: family planning
- DG7 • Conclusion





Impact Evaluation Design





Impact Evaluation Design

Randomization:

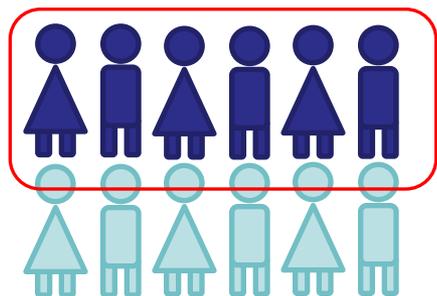
- 50% of beneficiaries randomized to take part in the discussion groups = Treatment Group
- Remaining 50% did not take part in the discussion groups = Control Group

Measures:

- Pre-intervention Survey
- Post-intervention Survey (6 months)
- Post-intervention Survey (16 months)
- Qualitative research



Pre-program



VSLA only



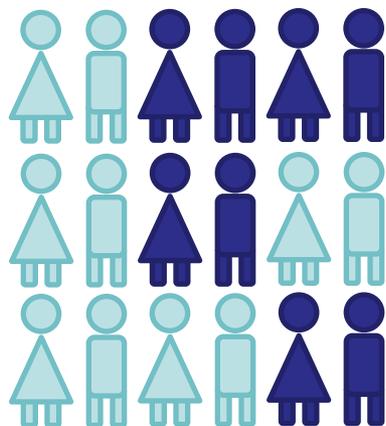
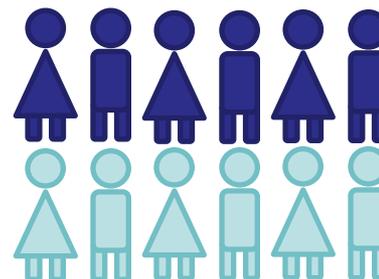
VSLA + Discussion group



Other differences



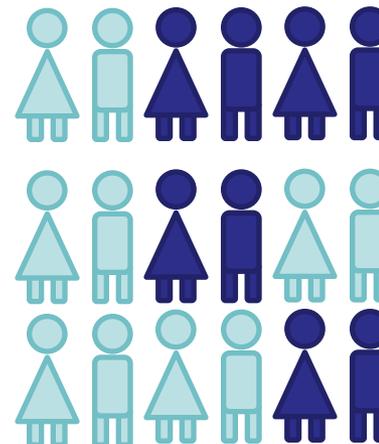
Post-program



VSLA only



VSLA + Discussion group (by lottery)



Because assignment was random, on average



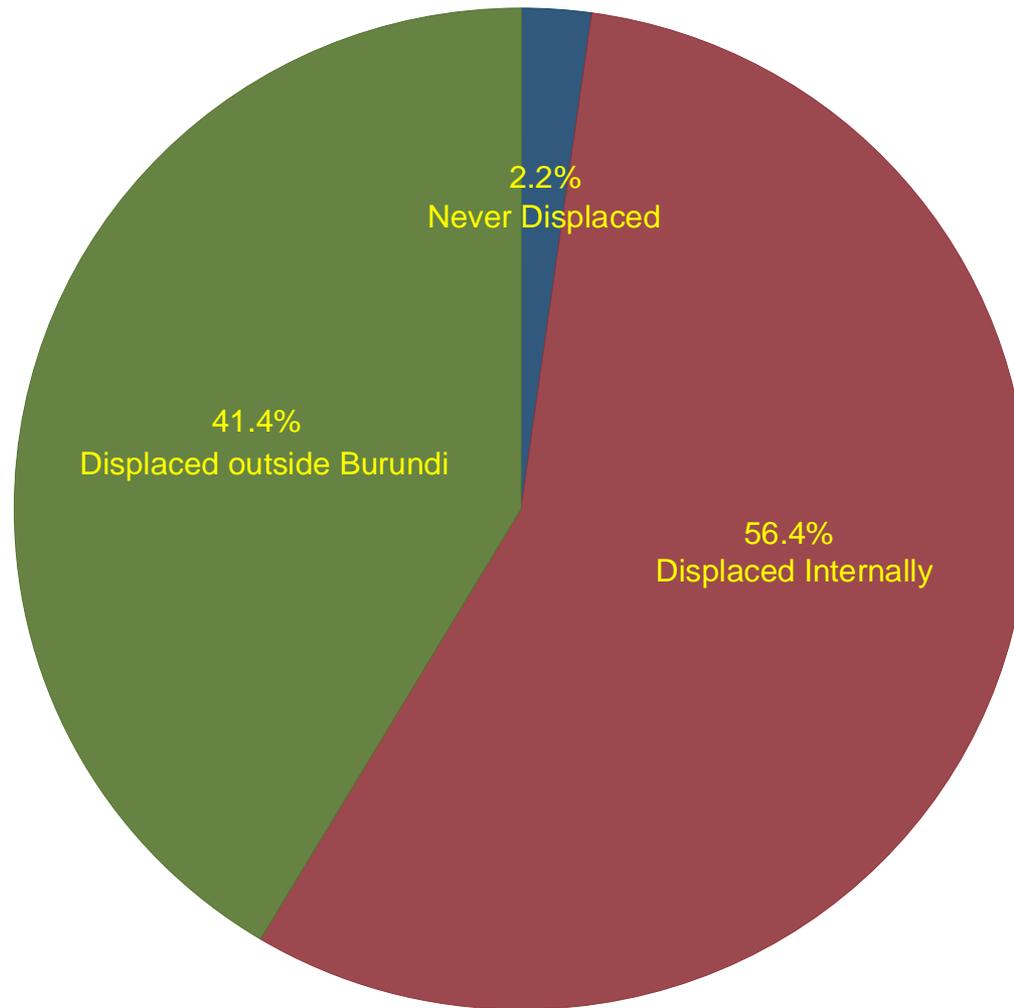


Participants

- 501 Participants (85%, 83%, 81%)
- 61% of VSLA female
- Age: Mean=37 (Range=15-80)
- Family size: Mean = 7 people (2-14)
- Education
 - 60% attended some primary school
 - 16% attended some secondary school
- Land: 72% owned some land

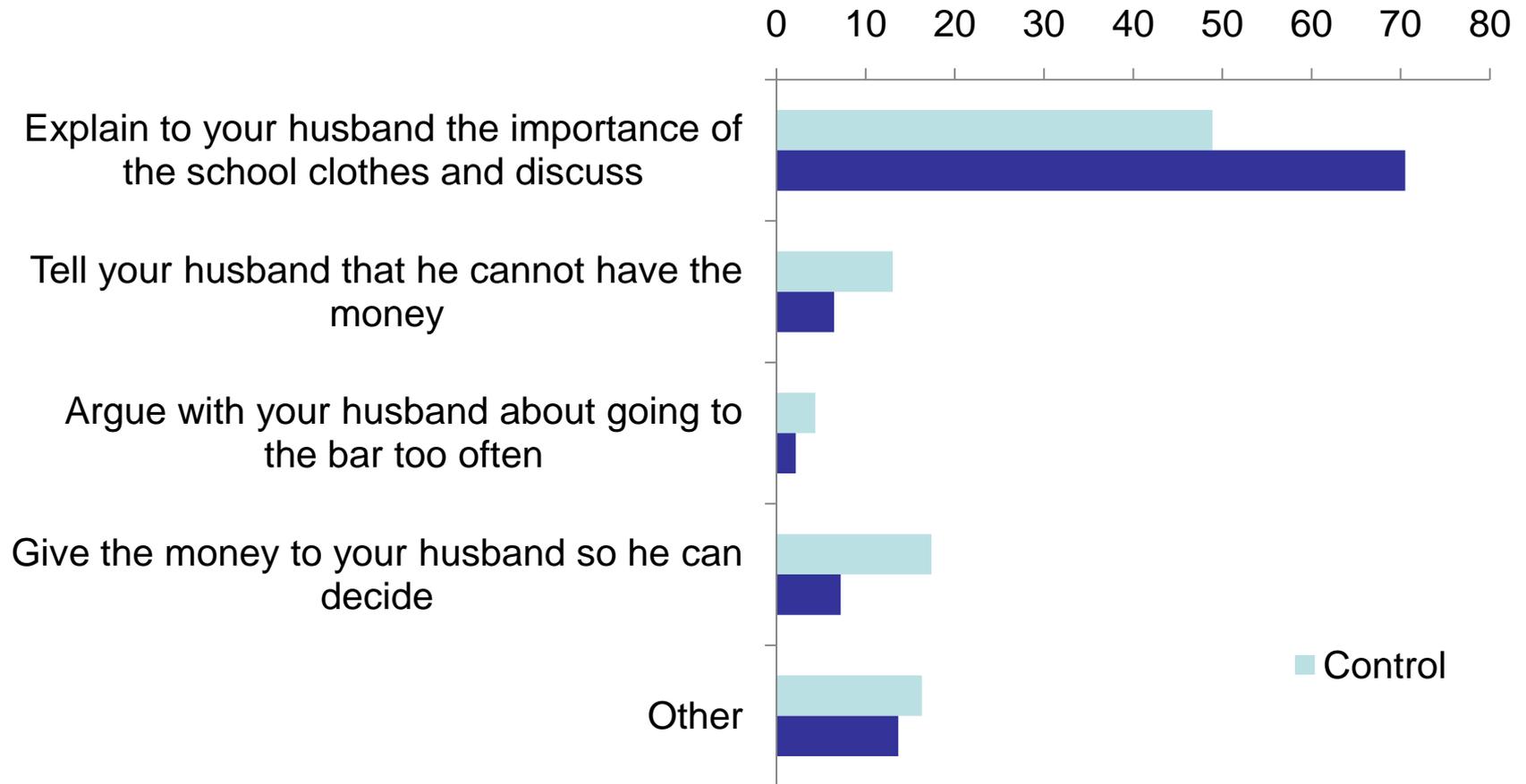


Figure 3: Displacement Rates among VSLA Participants



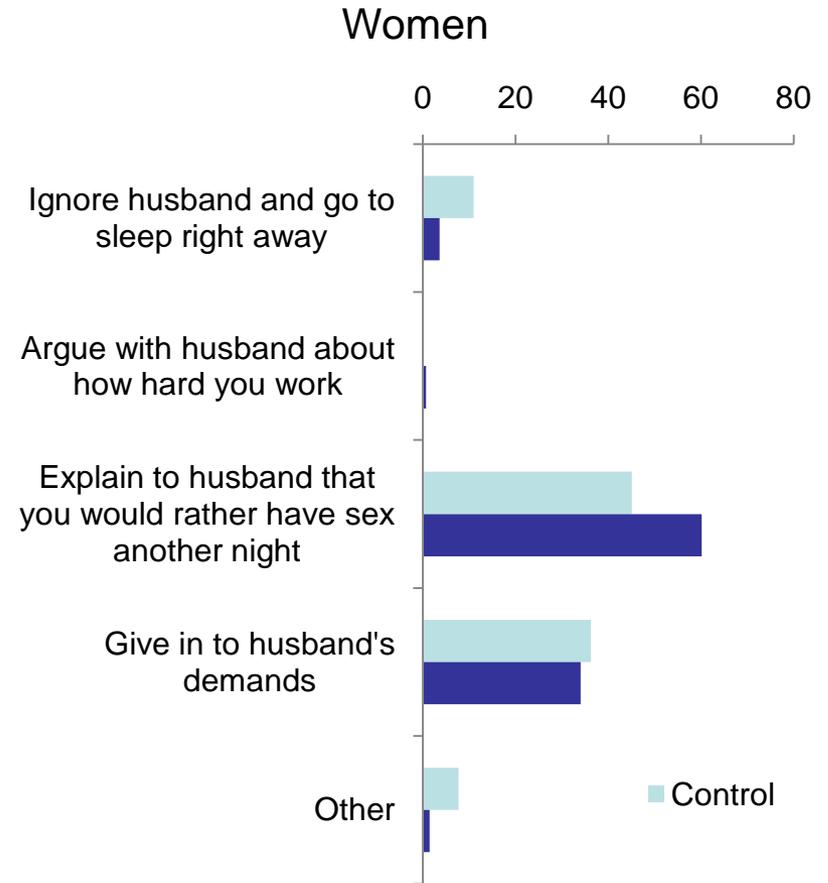
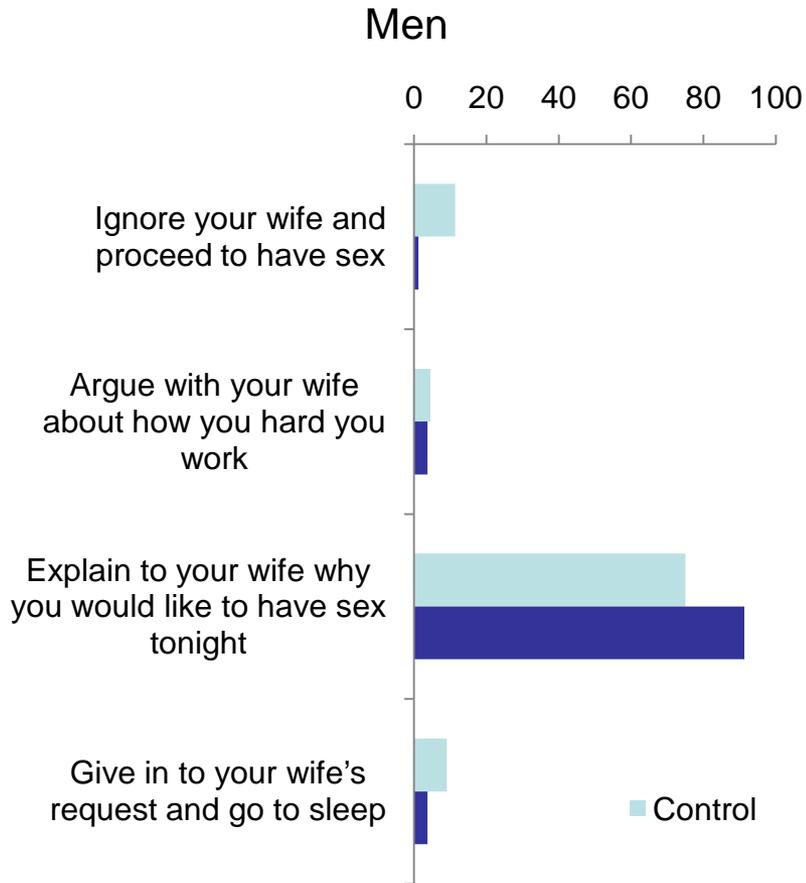
Preliminary Results: Impact of Discussion Group

You have taken a loan from your VSLA group to hire some labor to plant more seeds. You made a profit. With the money left after you pay back the VSLA, you would like to buy some clothes for your children to go to school. Your husband would like to spend the money on going to the bar. What do you do?





Wife tired, husband wants to have sex

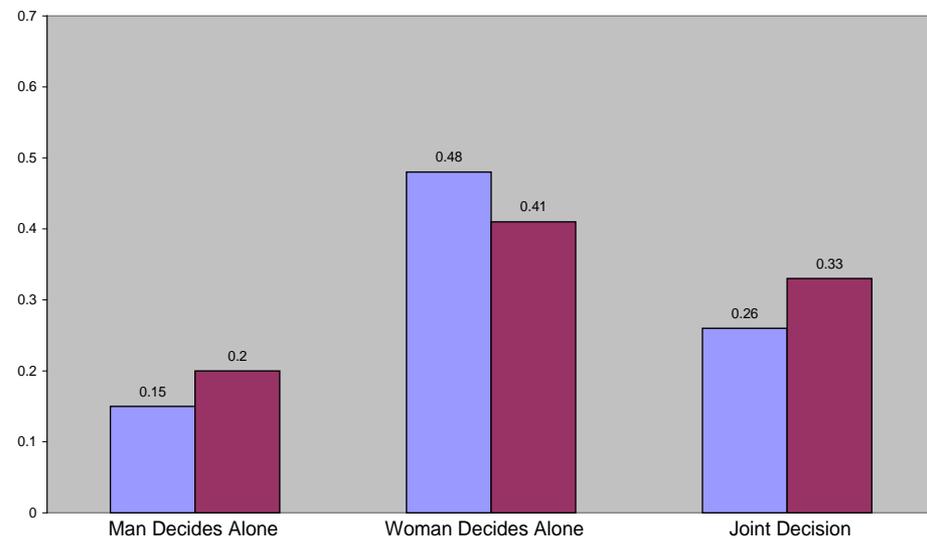
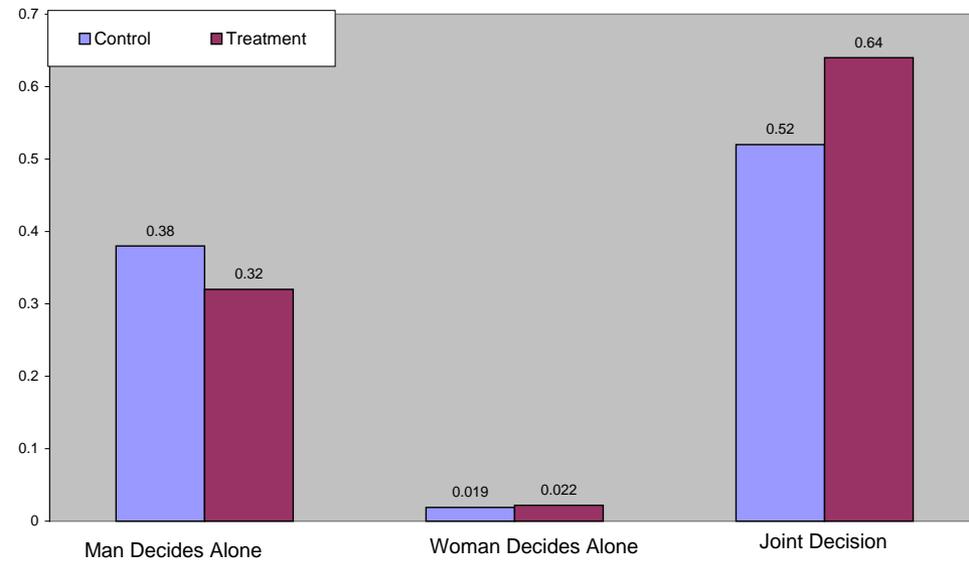




Decisions on Earnings

Male Members

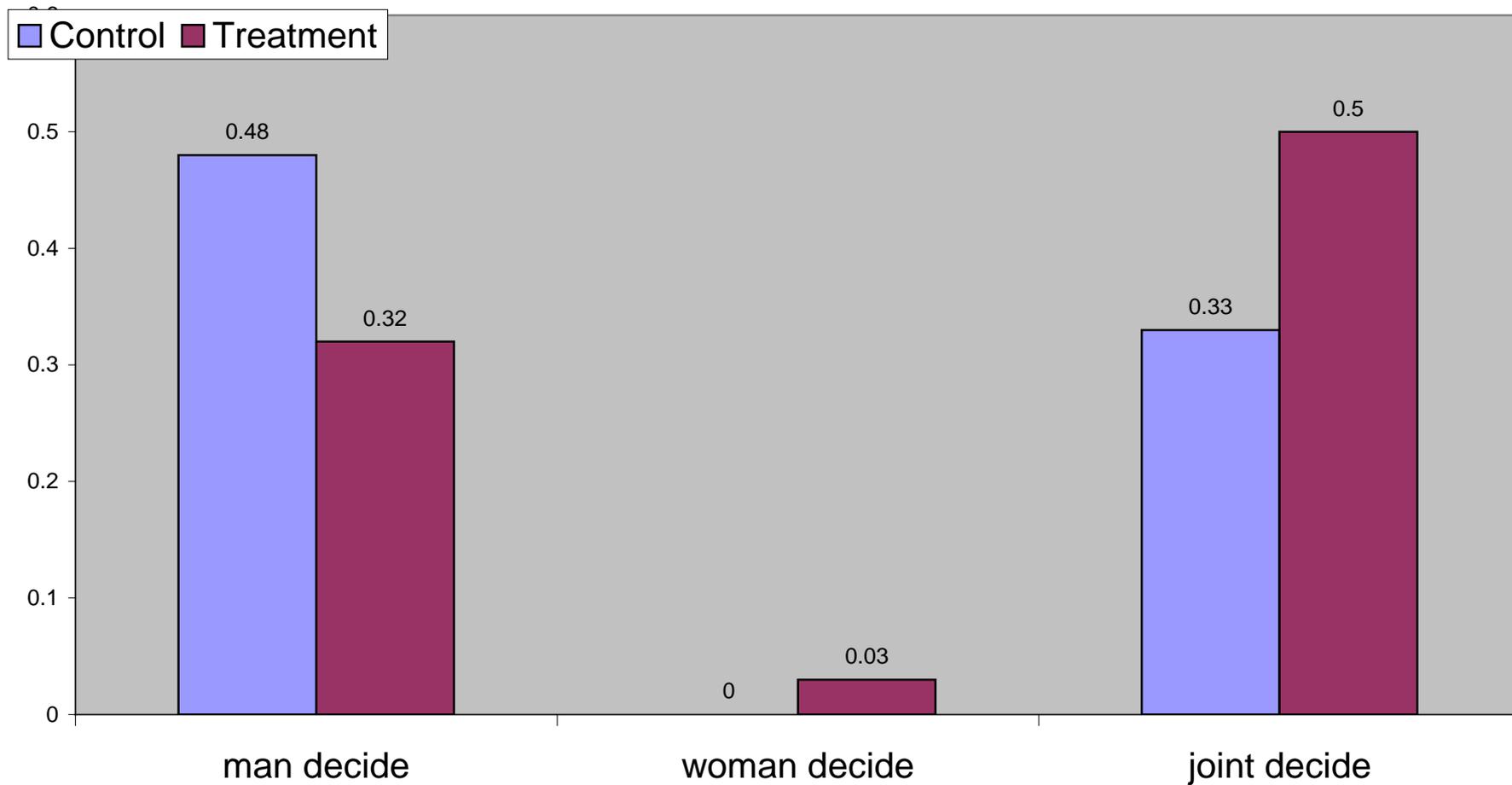
Female Members





Decisions on Sex

Male Members





Exposure to DV

- Decrease in domestic violence after wave 2
 - 8 percent reduction reported by women
- Decrease in domestic violence after final survey
 - 13 percent reduction reported by women



Conclusions

- Discussion groups increased discussion and joint decision making at home
- Discussion groups have potential to decrease domestic violence
 - More analysis needed
- High Demand for Discussion Groups – they are very popular



Challenges and Limitations

- Cannot tell impact of VSLA alone
- Potential spillover effects because of individual randomization
- Self-report bias
- Interpretation of joint decision making



Next Steps

- Refine program to include best possible discussion group (i.e., more sessions)
- Evaluate in another context (Cote D'Ivoire?) and use wait-list control
- Pilot test discussion groups for child protection programs with VSLA



THANK YOU

