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

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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?
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

- Introduction
- Day-to-Day Life: the household economy
- Household Cash Flows
- Household Decisions on Spending
- Major Purchases: planning and saving
- Other Household Decisions: family planning
- Conclusion
Impact Evaluation Design

- Savings Program (Access to financial services)
  - Reduced violence against women
- Savings Program (Access to financial services)
- Discussion Group (Increased awareness of joint decision making)
  - Reduced violence against women
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
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

- 56.4% Displaced Internally
- 41.4% Displaced outside Burundi
- 2.2% Never Displaced
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?

- Explain to your husband the importance of the school clothes and discuss
- Tell your husband that he cannot have the money
- Argue with your husband about going to the bar too often
- Give the money to your husband so he can decide
- Other
Wife tired, husband wants to have sex

For Men:
- Ignore your wife and proceed to have sex
- Argue with your wife about how hard you work
- Explain to your wife why you would like to have sex tonight
- Give in to your wife’s request and go to sleep

For Women:
- Ignore husband and go to sleep right away
- Argue with husband about how hard you work
- Explain to husband that you would rather have sex another night
- Give in to husband’s demands
- Other
Decisions on Earnings

Male Members

Female Members

Control | Treatment
--- | ---
Man Decides Alone | 0.38 | 0.019
Woman Decides Alone | 0.32 | 0.022
Joint Decision | 0.52 | 0.64

Control | Treatment
--- | ---
Man Decides Alone | 0.15 | 0.2
Woman Decides Alone | 0.48 | 0.41
Joint Decision | 0.26 | 0.33
Decisions on Sex

Male Members

- **man decide**
  - Control: 0.48
  - Treatment: 0.32

- **woman decide**
  - Control: 0.03
  - Treatment: 0.03

- **joint decide**
  - Control: 0.33
  - Treatment: 0.5
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