

# “If she didn't have any money she would still be looking for men”: Multi-level effects of an economic and social empowerment intervention to reduce adolescent girls' vulnerability to gender-based violence and HIV in Zambézia, Mozambique

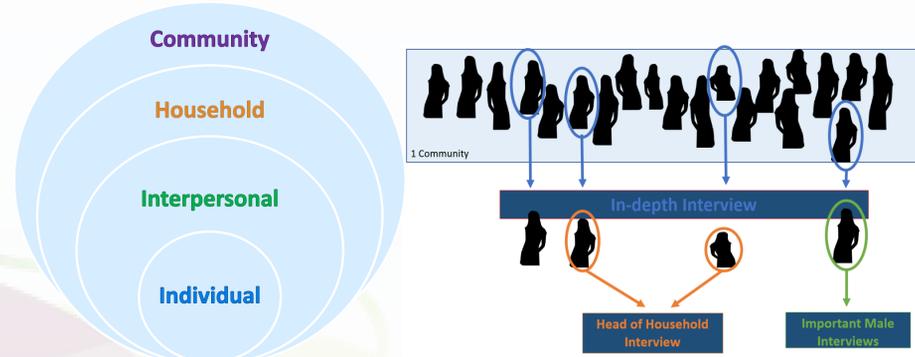
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## INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVE

- Women First implemented with girls aged 13-17 from 2010-2015. Girls attended group sessions on HIV & GBV prevention & were trained to sell products in their communities. Most girls participated ~2 years.
- Describe causal pathways of economic and social empowerment on reducing girls' vulnerability to HIV.

## MATERIALS & METHODS



| Populations              | Sample Size |         | Method                 | Eligibility Criteria   |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------|------------------------|--|
|                          | Round 1     | Round 2 |                        |  |
| <b>Girls</b>             | 49          | 47      | In-depth Interview     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13-19 years at Round 1</li> <li>• Participated in Women First intervention</li> </ul>                                       |
| <b>Household Heads</b>   | 24          | 24      | In-depth Interview     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18+ years</li> <li>• Identified by girl as Household Head</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Influential males</b> | 36          | 36      | In-depth Interview     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13+ years</li> <li>• Identified by girl as an influential male</li> <li>• Cannot be head of the girl's household</li> </ul> |
| <b>Community Members</b> | 12          | 12      | Focus group discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18+ years</li> <li>• Knowledgeable about intervention &amp; able to discuss community level effects</li> </ul>              |

## RESULTS

### Intervention effects on girls

- Some experienced reduced transactional and intergenerational sex
- Aware of types of violence, how to recognize, prevent and report GBV; however, knowledge seemed superficial
- Some experienced reduced physical and emotional violence
- Learned about gender roles, inequities and women's and girls' rights

### How?

- Business component reduced sexual behaviors primarily through increased economic independence
- Educational component increased knowledge about GBV, HIV, STIs, pregnancy, and age of majority

### Sustainability over time

- Reduced sexual behaviors sustainable for girls that maintained businesses/ income
- Retained GBV and HIV knowledge and awareness
- At Round 2, some said they do/would report GBV

*I don't even know what I would do if it wasn't for this business that I have. I would be having sex with men in Lua-Lua to earn some [money] for my survival and my family's...I think I would be a prostitute to help my mother, who is a farmer. What she produces isn't enough for all of us.*

- Girl, Round 1

### Intervention effects on households and communities

- Decreased intergenerational and transactional sex among some non-intervention girls
- Others learned about HIV, GBV and reporting; however, knowledge seemed superficial
- Some reported reduced domestic violence
- Community awareness that sex with minors is sexual violence
- Men feared punishment for having sex with minors

### How?

- Girls learned about HIV and GBV and shared with others, including through community presentations

### Sustainability over time

- Reduced sexual behaviors sustainable for girls with financial resources
- Awareness of HIV and GBV remained high, but unclear if men's fear of punishment translated to reduced GBV
- Some evidence physical violence reduced, mixed evidence sex with minors reduced

*Our dads don't beat us like before; they would drink and insult us a lot, and now they have stopped all of this because of the Women First program.*

- Girl, Round 2

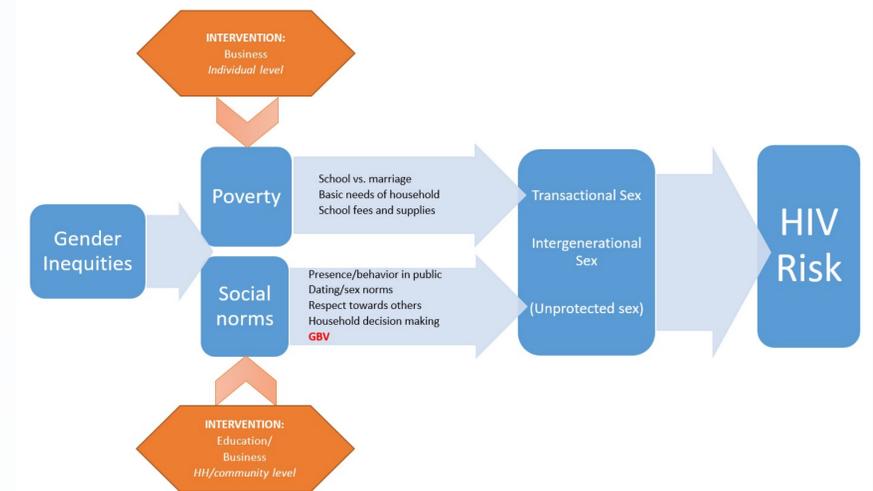
*Yes, it changed, because there were older men who liked this practice of having sex with minors, now with the program's arrival they were told that it is a crime and they're afraid. Even the parents who used to take their daughters to marry older men aren't doing it anymore, it doesn't happen as frequently.*

- FGD, Round 2

*Not only for those girls who participate in the program but also for those who are not involved, they know [about violence] because of their friends, these teach the others, and the same girls might speak to their mother and the*

## CONCLUSIONS

- Health information increased girls' and communities' knowledge and attitudes towards GBV and HIV, but earning money enabled girls to avoid high-risk behaviors, potentially reducing vulnerability to GBV and HIV.
- Sustainability of impact among girls varied; sexual behavior changes sustained when girls maintained businesses/income.
- Increased community GBV awareness persisted in some communities.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Diversify products; link girls to input suppliers; enhance girls' savings.
- Expand GBV education with a human-rights' based approach.



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