Measuring Impact:

Village Savings & Loan Associations and the well-being of survivors of sexual violence in eastern DRC

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OPEN SQUARE FOUNDATION

Asdi

Conflict within an existing culture of gender inequality

Pervasive sexual violence

Consequences

- Social rejection and stigma
- Mental health problems
- Lack of access to income

Democratic Republic of the Congo

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What is the impact of selected interventions on the psychological, social, and economic well-being of survivors of sexual violence?

- A socio-economic intervention
- A mental health intervention

What we wanted to learn

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What are Village Savings & Loan Associations?

VSLA groups can help members access financial resources.

Village Savings & Loan Associations (VSLA)

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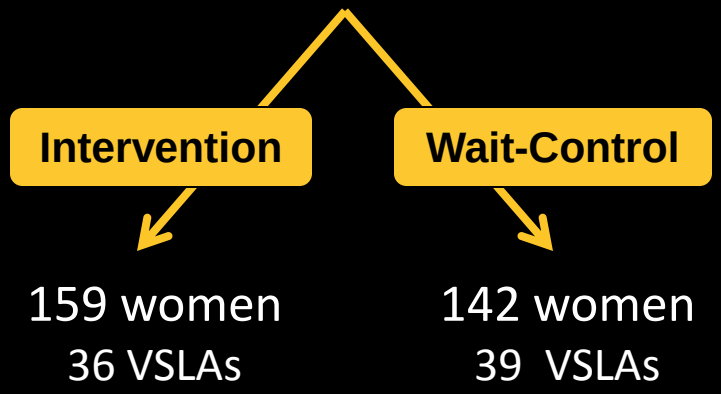
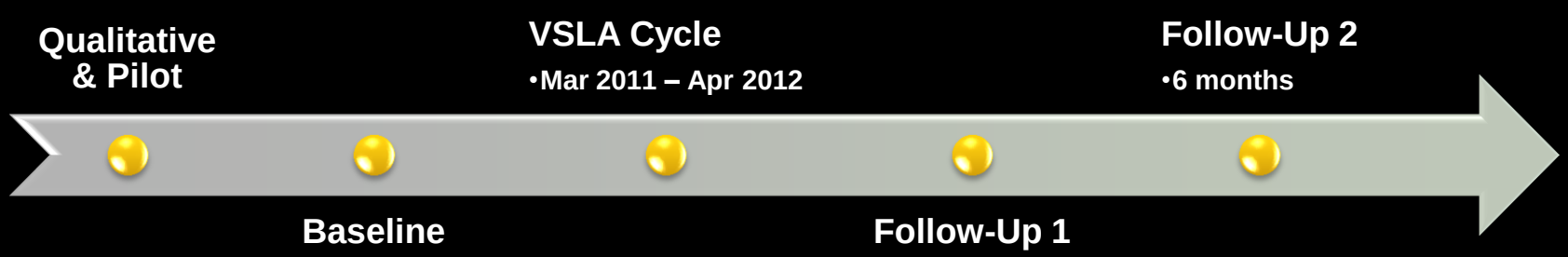
Randomized Controlled Trial



Timeline



What did participants say?

> *They took me as a sister and a friend*
>
> -VSLA member, Uvira

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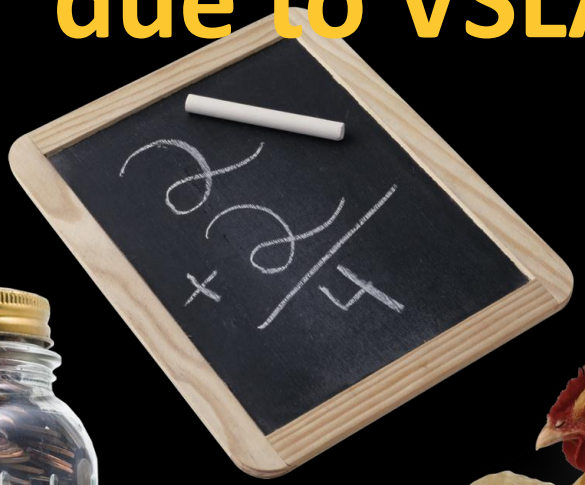
“Before participating in the group, women didn’t speak in their households.

But since we became VSLA members, our husbands consider our opinions.

VSLA Member, Walungu

What has changed in your life due to VSLA?



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94% completed

$49,427 shared out

43% interest (8%-86%)

VSLA Results

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How often do you feel hopeless about the future?

Hata kamwe,
Pas du tout,
Not at all

0

Kidogo,
Un peu,
A little bit

1

Kiasi ya Kadiri,
Un niveau moyen,
A moderate amount

2

Mingi,
Beaucoup,
A lot

3

Psychological Functioning

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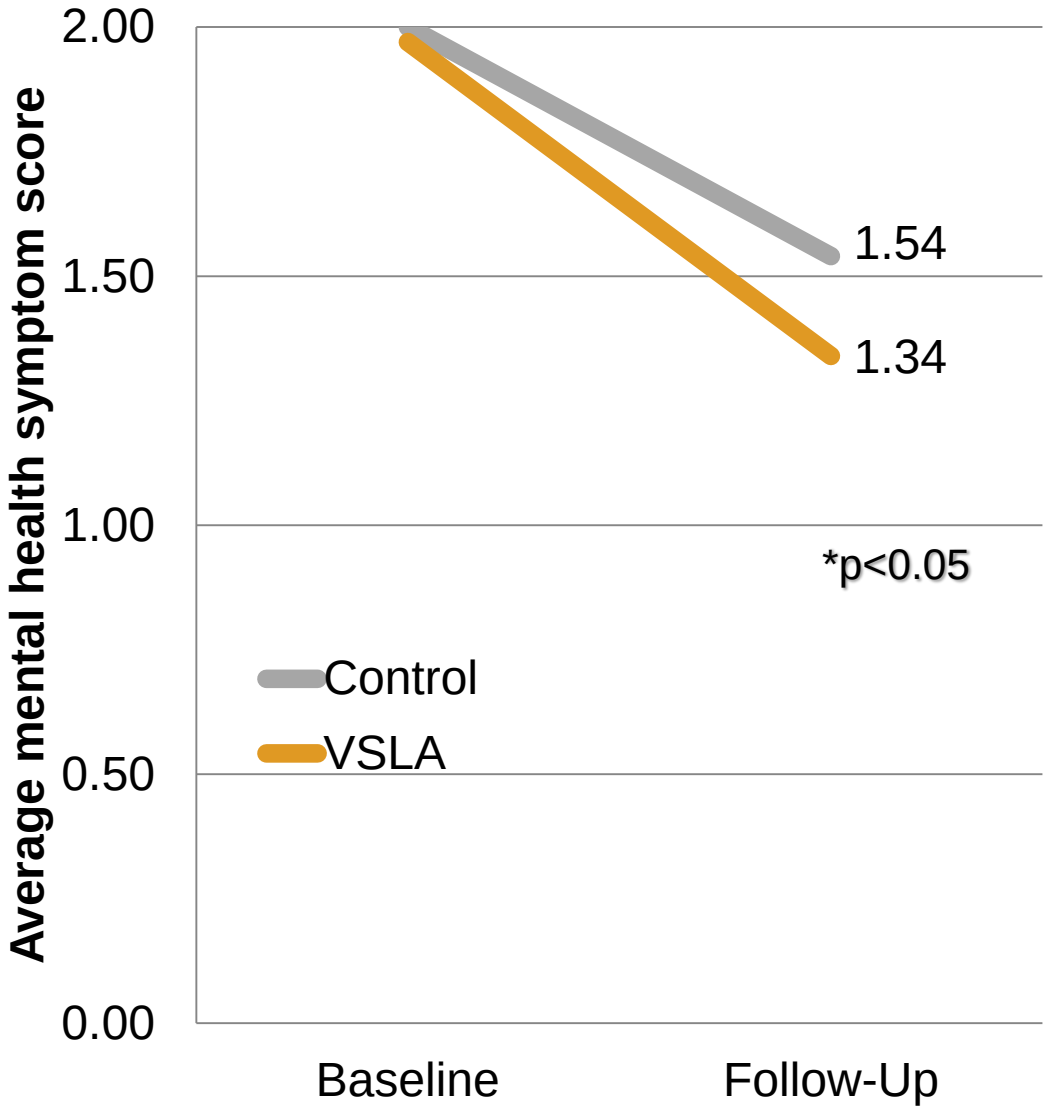
Significant improvement in mental health after VSLA for sexual violence survivors

Average score for 55 trauma symptoms

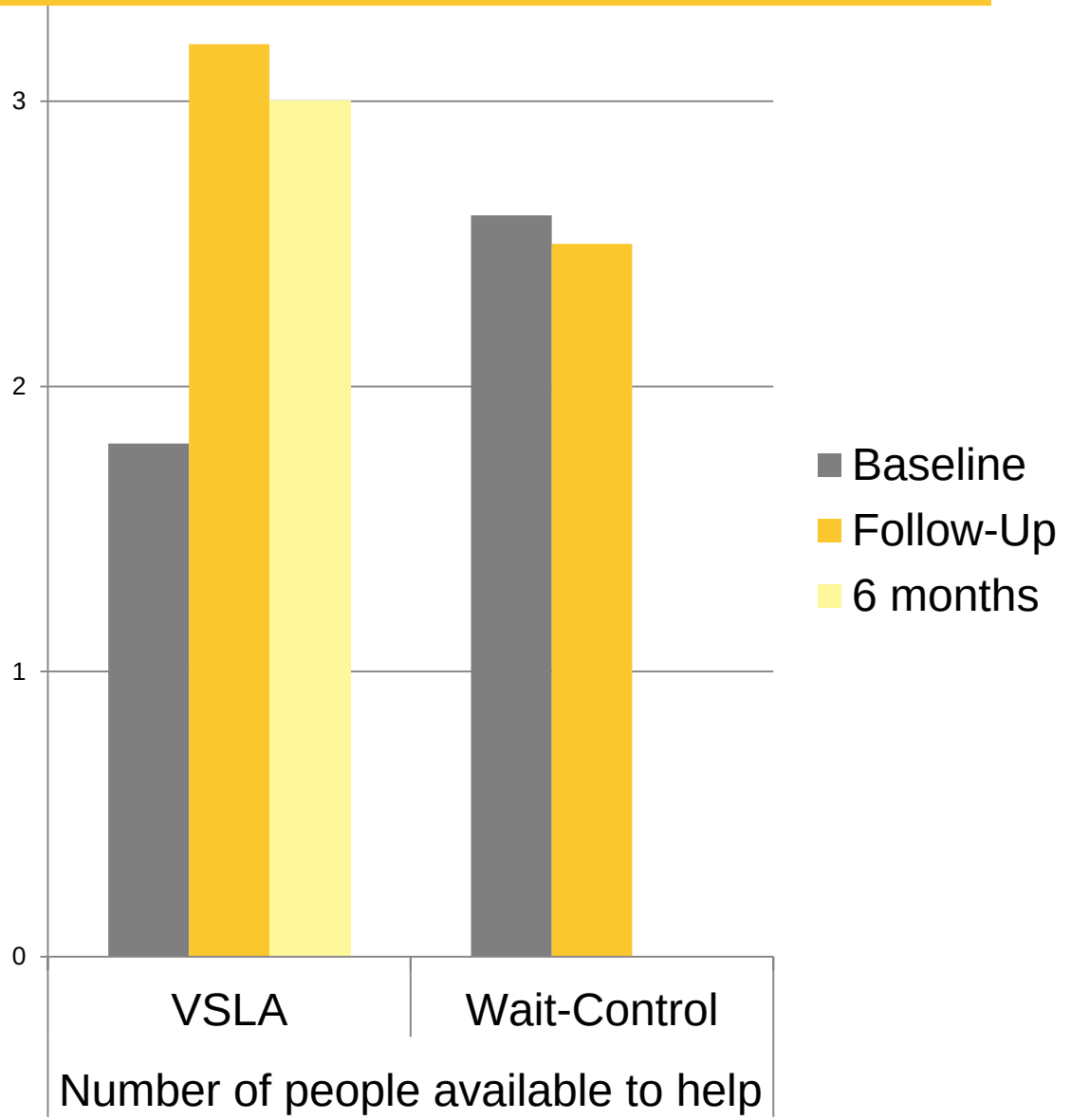
Subscales

- Depression*
- Anxiety*
- PTSD
- Local*



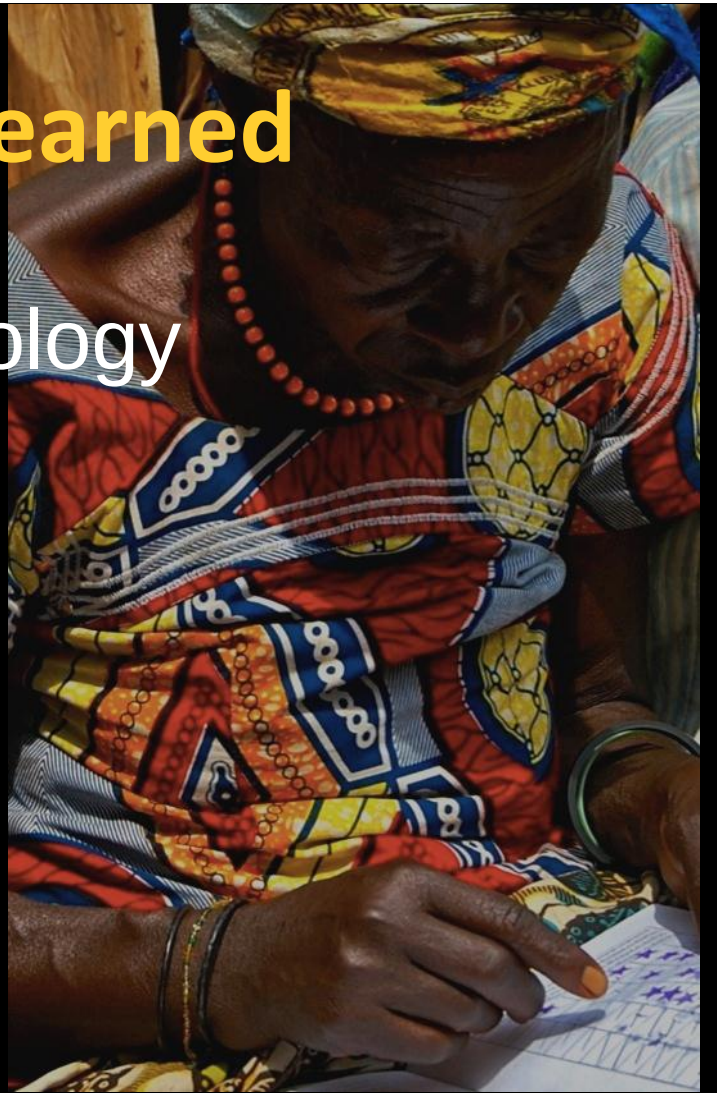
Social resources are significantly improved for VSLA participants compared to wait-control

- Social Coping
- Community Functioning
- Family Functioning



Challenges & Lessons Learned

- **Adapting** VSLA methodology
- **Security**
- Level of **education**
- **Expectations**



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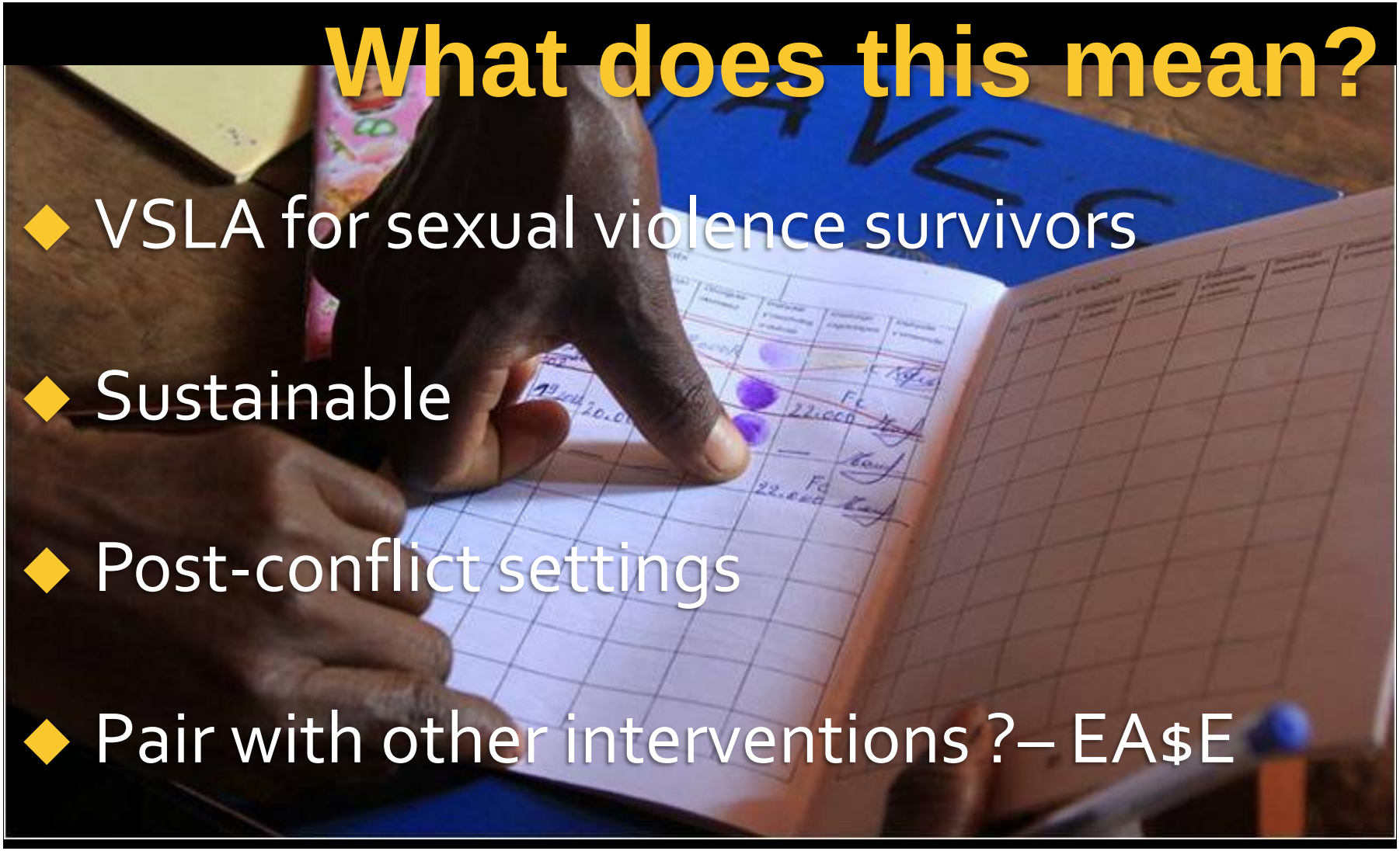
What does this mean?



- VSLA for sexual violence survivors
- Sustainable
- Post-conflict settings
- Pair with other interventions ?– EA$E

Key Message

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