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

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<td>Focus group discussion</td>
<td>18+ years, Knowledgeable about intervention &amp; able to discuss community level effects</td>
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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 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.