Effective prevention of intimate partner violence in Rwanda through a training programme for couples: results from the Indashyikirwa trial

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IPV prevention programmes traditionally been hesitant to work with couples due to concerns about safety & ethics

Many couples want to stay together, but require support and skills to manage conflict and prevent violence

Evidence on safe and effective strategies for working within couples to prevent IPV is needed
Indashyikirwa “Agents of Change”

Couples’ Curriculum

- Part of large, multifaceted programme
- 21 week training with groups of 15 M/F couples
- 1 female & 1 male facilitator from RWAMREC
- Built on infrastructure of CARE Rwanda’s village savings and loan association (VLSA) programme
- Foster change in knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviours:
  - Power imbalance as root cause of IPV
  - Manage triggers of IPV
  - Positive alternatives to IPV
Indashyikirwa Intervention Model

**Creation of “ENABLING ENVIRONMENT”:**
- Opinion Leader Training & Engagement
- Women’s Safe Spaces

**Couples Curriculum**

**Activist Training**
- GBV ACTIVISM [Drawing from SASA!]

**Coordination Across Levels**

**Cells**

**VSLAS**

**SECTOR & DISTRICT**

**RWN**

**RWAMREC**

**CARE Rwanda**
Overview of Impact Evaluation

- **Quantitative**: Cluster randomized controlled trial, randomised at **sector** level
  - Impact on **couples** assessed at **individual level**
  - Impact on **communities** assessed at **population level**

- **Qualitative**: In-depth interviews, focus groups and informal staff interviews with
  - Couples & Community Activists
  - Opinion Leaders
  - Women’s Spaces service users and facilitators
  - RWAMREC/RWN staff members
Impact Evaluation: Couples

Creation of “ENABLING ENVIRONMENT”:  
- Opinion Leader Training & Engagement  
- Women’s Safe Spaces

Coordination Across Levels

GBV ACTIVISM [Drawing from SASA!]

Couples Cohort: N=1,680 couples
Evaluation Questions?
Couple level

- Does *Indashyikirwa* achieve its goal of promoting healthy relationships and reducing conflict/violence among couples?
  - Changes in IPV (all types)?
  - Changes in relationship quality?
  - Changes in mental health, alcohol use, household development, overall well-being?
  - Beliefs about IPV and community engagement?
  - Any benefits to children in the household?
Quantitative: Data collection couples

- Separate data collection for women and men
- Facilitated by gender matched field staff
- Data collection via ACASI questionnaires
  - Internationally standardized measures
  - Measures developed/adapted for Rwanda
Couples Women: Reductions in IPV

Couple’s curriculum vs VSLA alone

- Overall IPV: 55% vs 44%
- Physical IPV: 61% vs 50%
- Sexual coercion: 50% vs 69%
- Economic IPV: 44% vs 68%
- Emotional IPV: 68%
- Children witnessing IPV:

Figures derived from adjusted odds ratios comparing couple’s training participants to VSLA alone.
Couples Women: Other Key Benefits

Couple’s curriculum vs VSLA alone

- Relationship conflict score: -.31
- Couple Communication: 76%
- Trust & Care with Partner: 82%
- Wife beating justified?: -1.03
- Corporal Punishment of Children: 54%

Figures derived from adjusted odds ratios comparing couple’s training participants to VSLA alone
Couples Women: Other Key Benefits

Couple’s curriculum vs VSLA alone

- Depression: 84%
- Self rated health: 95%
- Has any income: 43%
- HH food secure: 119%

Figures derived from adjusted odds ratios comparing couple’s training participants to VSLA alone
Couples Men: Reductions in IPV & Other Key Benefits

Couple’s curriculum vs VSLA alone

Overall IPV: 47%
Sexual coercion: 50%
Relationship conflict score: -.18
Wife beating justified?: -.86
Corporal punishment of Children: 42%

Figures derived from adjusted odds ratios comparing couple’s training participants to VSLA alone
Couples Men: Other Key Benefits

Couple’s curriculum vs VSLA alone

- **Couple Communication**: 166%
- **Trust & Care with Partner**: 28%
- **Depression**: 41%
- **Self rated health**: 96%
- **Has any income**: 47%
- **HH food secure**: 71%

Figures derived from adjusted odds ratios comparing couple’s training participants to VSLA alone.
Significant reductions in all forms of IPV among couples who participated in the curriculum & one of the few studies to show a reduction in sexual IPV among BOTH men and women

Women and men reported improved relationships: decreased conflict, better conflict management, increased communication, heightened trust

Women and men reported improved mental and physical health, and improved household economic status, including improvements in food security

Mothers and fathers reduced their belief in and use of corporal punishment against children in the household
THANK YOU!

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