The Indashyikirwa couples curriculum to prevent IPV and support healthy, equitable relationships in Rwanda

September 21 2017

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Funded by

Indashyikirwa Couples Curriculum

- Couples recruited from VSLAs
- 840 couples trained for 20 weeks
- Curriculum pre-tested over 1 month informed staffing, content, approach
- Foster change in knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviors:
  - Power imbalance as root cause of IPV
  - Manage triggers of IPV
  - Positive alternatives to IPV

Research with Couples

- Across 3 intervention sites, **IDIs** with 5 couples
  - 1) November 2015 (before curriculum)
  - 2) May 2016 (immediately after curriculum)
  - 3) May 2017 (1 year post midline)
- Interviewed separately by male and female interviewers
- Expectations/impressions of curriculum; decision-making, gender roles, communication, conflict resolution; experiences of conflict/violence
- **IDIs** with 9 RWAMREC staff 1) May 2016 2) May 2017 on working with couples
- Thematic analysis using NVIVO (*completed*), secondary analysis assessing what each partner said and how differs over time (*ongoing*)

Couples Appreciation of Curriculum Content

98 % retention rate of 840 couples trained

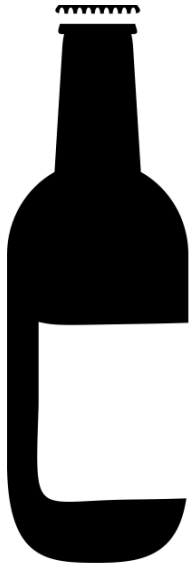
- Relevant content, foundation of **balancing** power
- Learning forms, impact, how to manage triggers of IPV
- Skills building; communication, conflict resolution
- Spending positive time together; identified gap
- Women liked session valuing domestic responsibilities

Lessons Learned from Working with Couples

- Rare to be trained as couples for length of time
  - Supported equal participation
  - Developed trust with facilitators and among couples
- Participatory approach, safe space
- Take home exercises; trying something new!
- Male and female facilitator (lesson from pre-test)

Curriculum Areas Initially Resisted or Difficult

- Men reducing alcohol or supporting domestic duties due to stigma
- Equal sexual consent/initiation with marriage
- Sharing of financial decisions & resources (*cultural norms)*
- Couples reported changes became easier through:
  - Witnessing benefits through take home activities
  - Drawing on support from other couples
  - Learning laws, policies support these changes



Relationship Dynamics and Changes

- Value of partnership model
- Couples increasingly communicative
- Spend more quality time together
- Some couples legally married to secure women's rights
- Solve conflicts more constructively
- Reported reduced levels of all forms of IPV

Value of Collecting/Analyzing Longitudinal Data from Couples

- Insights from both perspectives of partners at different time periods (including discordant reports)
- Different **motivations** for joining curriculum; women more likely for IPV/conflict; men for stipend/training
- Men more likely justified/downplayed IPV in comparison to women at baseline
- Longitudinal allows **rapport**; couples more open at endline about IPV (reported as in the past)
- Compare partners significant areas of change

What She Said……He Said

"Sometimes we argued about doing something and would end up not doing it. Each one had his/her own way of understanding. After receiving the training, they gave us advice and told us each one should share his or her ideas and you are able to do much more together."

(Female Partner, Eastern Province, Endline)

"At first I thought, let me go to get the compensation, but I realized the compensation was less important than what we were learning, because you can finish the compensation before you arrive home but if the project stops, what we were learning changed us and will enable us to build our families."

(Male Partner, Eastern Province, Endline)

Thank You!

Acknowledgments

Pls: Lori Heise (Johns Hopkins), Lyndsay McLean (SDD), Kristin Dunkle (SA MRC)

Feedback from Implementing Partners: Lea Liliane Niyibizi (CARE Rwanda), Ritha Nyiratunga (RWAMREC), Evode Habiyonizeye (RWN)

Feedback to Presentation: Elizabeth Starmann

Gender Violence & Health

GBV METHODS SHORT COURSE applications open

“Researching Gender-Based Violence:

Methods and Meaning”

Who should apply:

Individuals who will conduct or commission research on gender based violence

Location:

Gender Violence & Health Centre, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (London, UK)

Dates:

12-16 February 2018

Details:

https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/courses/short-courses/gender-violence

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