Exploring the six-year impacts of Bandebereho on IPV and VAC

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*This presentation was modified in October 2011 to address a small error.*
Bandebereho Intervention

A gender-transformative intervention for couples who are expecting or current parents (ages 21-35) of children under five years

Uses fatherhood as an entry-point to recruit men to:

- Prevent violence against women & children
- Promote reproductive, maternal, and child health
- Build healthier couple relations
- Promote men’s caregiving
The Bandebereho curriculum was adapted from Program P

It includes 15 weekly sessions (8 for couples)

Small group sessions are designed to:

- Encourage reflection on gender roles and norms
- Promote couple communication
- Strengthen relationship skills
- Build parenting skills
- Enable participants to practice new behaviors
We piloted Bandebereho with 1,700 couples in four districts from 2013 to 2015.

A randomized controlled trial of the pilot already demonstrated impacts on a range of outcomes targeted by the intervention:

- Less intimate partner violence
- More equitable couple relations
- Greater maternal health seeking
- Less violence against children
- More equitable caregiving
- Greater use of family planning
After seeing the changes in my husband, my heart rejoiced, but I was asking myself, ‘will it really last?’

- ‘Florence’

In 2021, we conducted a six-year follow-up study to understand:

- Have these positive changes been sustained over time? Which ones?
- Have changes in couple relations and parenting practices led to impacts on children’s development?
A two-arm randomized controlled trial with 1,199 couples

Eligible fathers

Treatment (Bandebereho)
575 couples

Control (no intervention)
624 couples

Randomization at the individual level

Participants surveyed at multiple time points:

- BASELINE 2015
- 9 MONTHS 2015
- 21 MONTHS 2016
- 76 MONTHS 2021

1,003 men (84%)
1,021 women (85%)
794 children
Sustained impacts on IPV

Nearly six years later, compared to the control group women in Bandebereho report lower rates of all four forms of IPV.

**PHYSICAL**
- Control: 54.5%
- Treatment: 35.2%
- OR = 0.45, p<0.001

**SEXUAL**
- Control: 52.2%
- Treatment: 35.2%
- OR = 0.50, p<0.001

**EMOTIONAL** (moderate/severe)
- Control: 49.9%
- Treatment: 28.6%
- OR = 0.40, p<0.001

**ECONOMIC**
- Control: 66.2%
- Treatment: 47.5%
- OR = 0.47, p<0.001

*Women’s reports: only women were asked about IPV.*
Improved parenting behaviors

Compared to the control group, Bandebereho parents:

- Use less violence against their children – including harsh discipline & physical punishment
- Are more supportive of positive discipline
- Spend more time on responsive care

And parents report better behavioural outcomes for their children (SDQ):

- Fewer externalizing behaviours (conduct, hyperactivity problems)
- Fewer internalizing behaviours (emotional, peer problems)

Past-month physical punishment of children

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<tr>
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<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
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<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
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OR = 0.68  
$p=0.017$

OR = 0.72  
$p=0.009$
Multiple lasting effects

Long-term impacts also found on a range of other outcomes:

- Women’s & men’s mental health
- Women’s antenatal care attendance and men’s accompaniment
- Women’s involvement in household decision-making
- Men’s participation in childcare and household tasks

Stay tuned!
Why these lasting impacts?

Bandebereho takes a gender-transformative approach:

- It tackles social norms & cultural beliefs
- It doesn’t teach, but encourages self-transformation
- It builds relationship skills and provides space for couple communication

It is contextually adapted for the Rwandan context:

- It responds to real issues facing couples in the community
- Facilitators are community members themselves
- Bandebereho is viewed as a home-grown solution, not imported
It works with men and couples as parents:
- The focus on fatherhood motivates men to participate
- As they become parents, participants are open to change
- The prenatal period provides tangible ways to engage men and foster changes in behavior

Bandebereho benefited from a strong enabling environment:
- There is strong political will and supportive policies
- Government has been involved in Bandebereho from the very start

Together, we are now taking Bandebereho to scale through the Rwandan health system
Acknowledgements

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