Examining the effectiveness of a gender transformative approach in economic empowerment programs to reduce intimate partner violence

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Ripple Effect

- 30 years experience working with farming communities in rural Africa (formerly Send a Cow).
- 6 countries: Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia and Zambia.
- Areas of expertise: Sustainable Agriculture and Enterprise Development and Gender and Social Inclusion.
Economic and Social Empowerment (EASE) Approach

- Economic empowerment is farm based for food and income.
- Social Empowerment-increasing women involvement in decision making and leadership as well as challenging gender inequalities.
- Includes use of a gender Transformative Household Methodology developed by Ripple Effect.
Research objectives

- To develop approaches and tools for measuring changes in acceptance for, and rates of, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

- To increase the capacity of Ripple Effect program staff to deliver quality violence prevention programs and ethically collect data.

- To identify best practices and lessons learned from Ripple Effect’s Economic & Social Empowerment (EASE) programming.
Characteristics of research population.

- Farming is the main source of livelihood.
- Women spend the highest time in farming activities.
- Women have low income, little decision-making power and are more likely to conform to gender norms.
- Women living under poor conditions are more likely to experience violence.
- 60% of ever-partnered women aged 15-49 have experienced at least one form of IPV – emotional, physical or sexual (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015).
Project context

- **Wealth Creation project:** 2013-2016
  - **Goal:** To increase farm productivity and income.

- **Improving Nutrition project:** 2018-2021
  - **Goal:** To improve child and mother nutrition food security.
  - **Integrated gender-mainstreaming component** as part of the intervention.
Research methodology

**Qualitative:**
- Used in Wealth creation project for formative research to understand how the lives of women were impacted by EASE approach.
- **Data tools:** focus group discussions and key informant in-depth interviews.
- **Respondents:** 5 women-only groups, 4-men only groups and 16 key informants

**Quantitative:**
- Used in Improved Nutrition project to understand characteristics of IPV and effect of EASE on rates of violence.
- **Data tools:** Survey tools developed used at two points-Initial participation (just after the start) and one year into the program.
- **Respondents:** 274 women and 96 men
Formative research findings

- Reduced workloads for women.
- Economic empowerment—increased food and income security.
- Greater involvement of women in decision making.
- Improved household dynamics and relationships.
- Less conflict over sex and money—violence reduced.
- Gender attitudes—positive changes between spouses.
- Women’s influence in the wider community increased.
Quantitative research findings

- IPV prevalence.
- Changes in IPV level after EASE approach.
- Gender inequitable attitudes on violence.
- Justification of violence
IPV prevalence

- 51% experienced physical violence
- 48% experience emotional violence
- 35% experience sexual violence

Before working with Ripple Effect

59% of women reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence.

71% of women had experienced any form of violence during their lifetime.
Changes in IPV levels

A year after EASE APPROACH participants said

- > 60% IPV had decreased or stopped entirely
- 68% physical violence decreased/stopped
- 67% sexual violence decreased/stopped
- 63% emotional violence decreased/stopped
- 43% Economic violence decreased/stopped

A small proportion (8% on average) experienced an increase in IPV
Gender inequality attitudes

- 85% men should be head of the household.
- 82% a woman should obey her husband.
- 53% a woman’s most important role is to take care of her home, cook for her family and take care of children.
- 47% it’s important for a woman to be a virgin when she gets married for the first time.
- 42% it’s the wife’s obligation to have sex with the husband.

92% agreed with at least one gender inequitable attitude.

22% agreed with all 5 gender inequitable attitudes assessed.

4% did not agree with any inequitable attitudes at all.
Acceptance of violence

53% felt violence was acceptable in certain circumstances.

47% felt no reason that violence against a woman was acceptable.

1 in 2 respondents thought there was no reason that IPV was acceptable.

The most common reason for acceptance of violence was when a woman neglected her children - 42%
Additional interventions

- GBV awareness through mass media and community forums.
- Integrating GBV training into community farmer trainings.
- Developing and strengthening community safeguarding mechanisms.
- GBV referral systems.
- Training men GBV prevention champions.
Gender attitudes- STUDY II

- 83% It is natural for a man to be head of the household/family
- 82% A woman’s most important role is to take care of her home and children.
- 68% It is important for a woman to be a virgin when she first gets married.
- 57% A wife should obey her husband.
- 53% It is a wife’s obligation to have sex with her husband whenever he wants it.
Change in acceptance of violence – STUDY II

- Only 15% felt violence is justified when a woman neglects her children.
- Just 9% agreed a woman should keep violence private and 11% that women should tolerate violence to keep family together.
- Acceptance of violence if a woman refused to have sex, argued with her husband or was suspected of having an affair dropped to 3-9%
Future research

- Apply and assess EASE approach in different contexts and situations.

- Conduct longitudinal study on impact of EASE on IPV rates to see if reduction in violence is sustained.

- Further explore the dynamics of change around acceptance of violence, and the underlying beliefs that drive strongly-held patriarchal norms.
Further reading

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