

# NIGERIA

## Promoting Female Empowerment and Preventing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) through a Multi-Sectoral Intervention Targeting Couples in Ibadan, Nigeria

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### BACKGROUND

Sub-Saharan African women continue to experience IPV and other coercive behaviors, including limited reproductive freedoms in their households. Women's economic empowerment is often touted as the silver bullet for gender equity due to the theorized linkages between women's earnings and bargaining power, which can foster gender equality within the households. However, while the focus on economic empowerment is critical, research suggests that these approaches are not enough to address the gender norms that underlie and perpetuate unequal relationships in multiple domains. Hence, programs that set out to empower women must take a multi-pronged approach that tackles key domains of women's disempowerment as well as include a gender transformation component that allows strategic inclusion of male partners in the program, so that men are able to experience and understand the relevance of shifts in gender relations for themselves, their families and communities, rather than for the woman alone. Moreover, such an approach may foster long-term change towards an egalitarian relationship that is free not only of violence, but other displays of power dynamics and coercive behaviors such as controlling women's resources and reproductive decision-making. However, rigorous studies evaluating the effectiveness of multi-sectoral gender transformative interventions targeting couples are missing from Africa.

Given these limitations, the University of Ibadan and ICRW are leveraging an on-going cluster-randomized control trial in urban and peri-urban Ibadan, Nigeria for an in-depth examination of the program's impact on violence and coercive behaviors. The cluster RCT is testing a multi-sectoral program that aims to foster a more egalitarian relationship within the household by targeting critical domains of empowerment among young couples, where the woman is 18-35 years old. The trial consists of 4 arms. In arm 1, the couple receives a structured program on gender socialization, whereas arm 2 receives financial literacy education in addition to gender socialization education. Arm 3 receives the full package of intervention, which includes family planning counselling, financial literacy education and gender socialization training. The 4th arm serves as the control group.

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The specific objective of this project is to prepare two manuscripts on the themes below and disseminate the study findings widely:

1. To examine the impact of the program components on the reduction of different forms of IPV (sexual, emotional and physical) and coercive behaviors (sexual and reproductive).

2. To understand the mechanisms or pathways by which the program components influence levels of violence and coercive behaviors.
3. To document and disseminate the findings to advance global knowledge on what works to prevent violence.

### PROJECT METHODS:

**Study Site:** The intervention was implemented in 48 enumeration areas in two peri-urban and two urban local government areas of Ibadan, Nigeria

**Study Population:** The intervention reached 1236 randomly selected couples, where the woman was aged 18-35 years old and the couple resided in the same household.

**Data Collection:** Baseline survey data collection ended in July 2018. The end-line data collection will commence in March 2019, 6 months post-intervention. The surveys include detailed information on socio-demographic characteristics as well as measures of IPV, reproductive and sexual coercion, gender attitudes, household decision-making and time-use. In addition, new data in the form of in-depth interviews with couples will be collected in the intervention areas for a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms by which the program impacts outcomes of interest.

**Data Analysis:** The methodology for analysis will rely on the randomized control trial design of the intervention. To assess the impact of the program modalities on reduction of violence and coercive behaviors, the project will rely on survey data collected at baseline and end-line and compare changes over time in the combined intervention arms as well as separately relative to the control arm, using difference-in-difference statistical models. To understand the pathways by which the program impacts violence outcomes both survey data and qualitative data will be utilized. The will implement structural equation statistical models to understand the different pathways, which will be supplemented with thematic analysis of the qualitative data.

### STUDY CONTRIBUTION:

This project is among the few programs that is simultaneously addressing structural and normative factors that stand in the way of women's empowerment and risk of violence and is being rigorously evaluated. With the WBG/SVRI funds the project will be able to examine and document the impact of the program and its components on reduction of IPV and coercive behaviors. If shown efficacious, there will be a scalable intervention that can reduce violence in Ibadan households and beyond, into Nigerian and African society.

