

Girl empower – a gender transformative mentoring and cash transfer intervention to promote adolescent well-being

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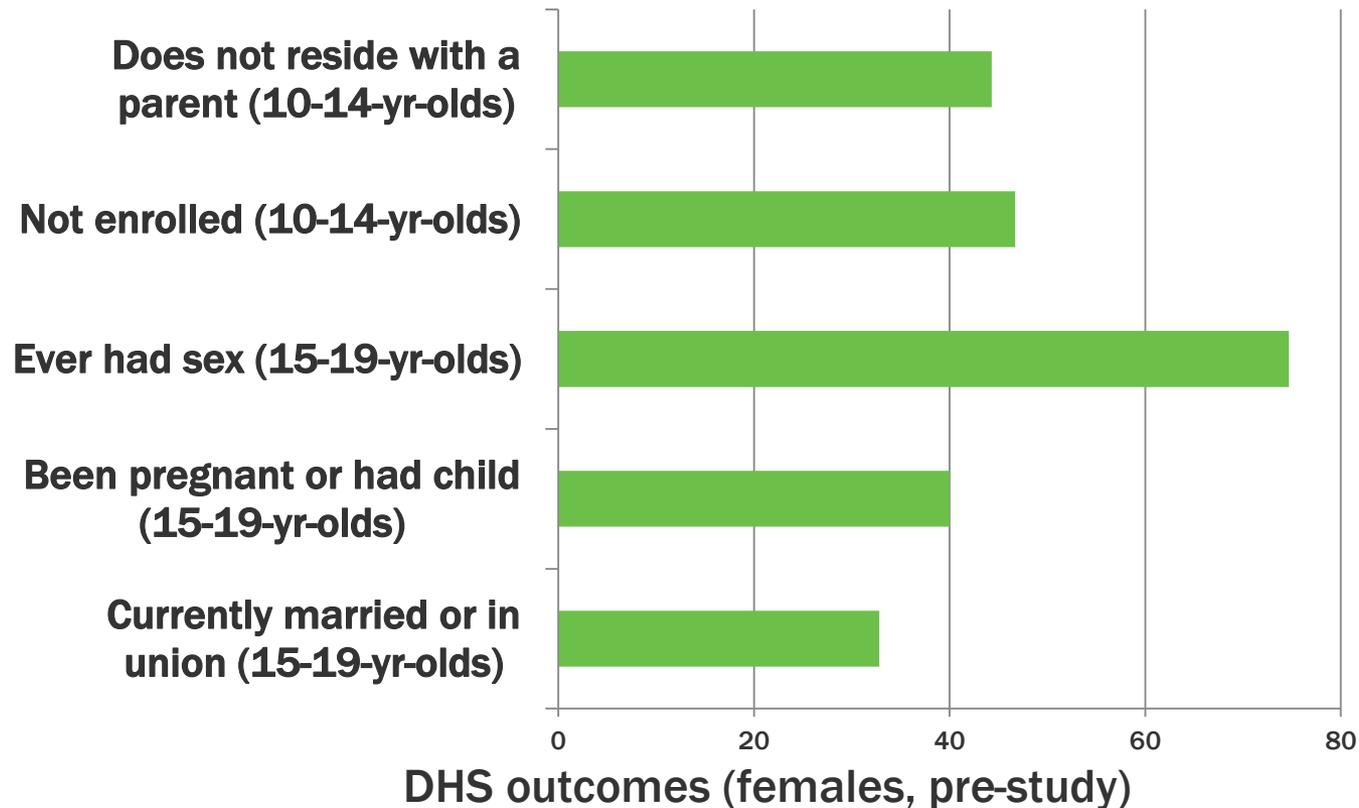
Presented by K Hallman, PhD

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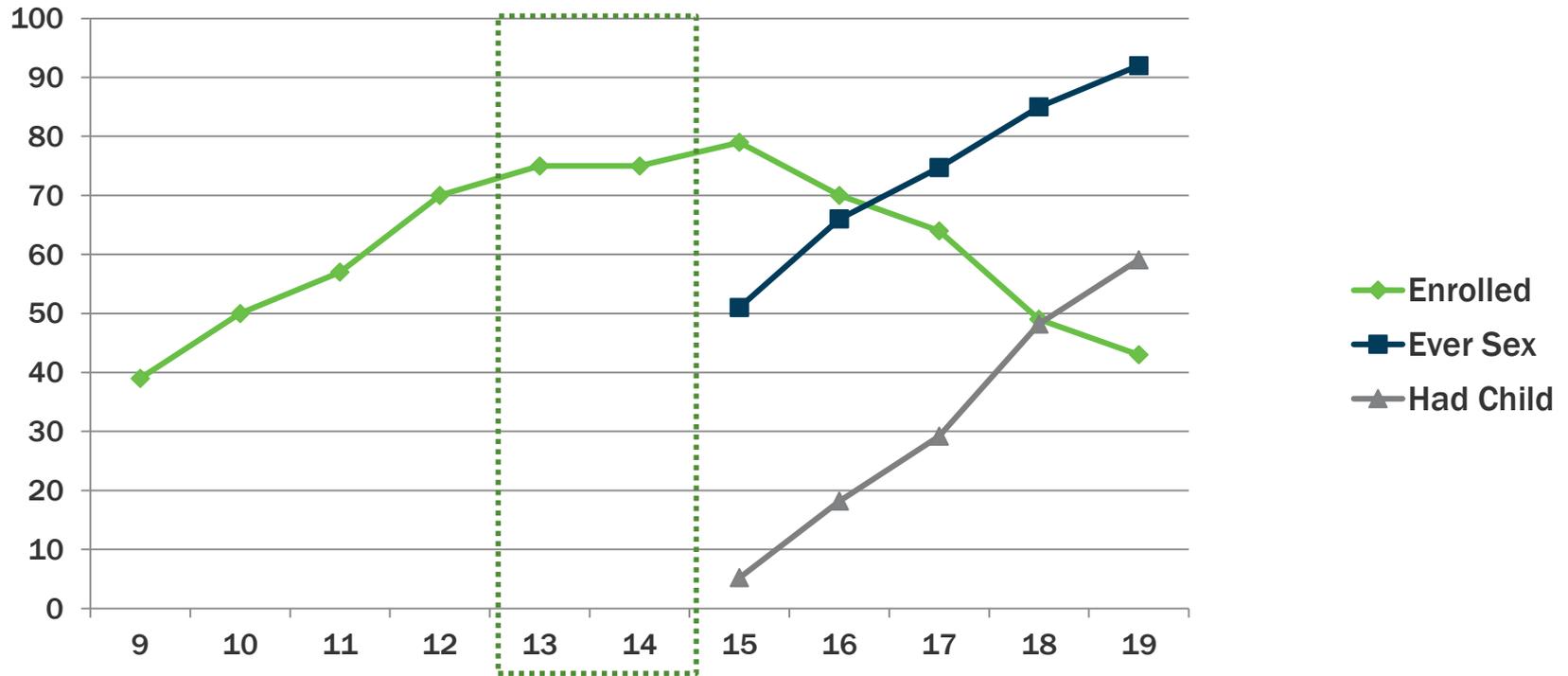
High levels of exclusion and structural violence against girls

North Central (Nimba & Bong Counties), Liberia (DHS 2007)



Key pre-program indicators by age => decision to focus on females aged 13-14

Liberia 2007 DHS



At project inception

- Few girl group mentoring programs had examined sexual violence as an outcome
- No girl group mentoring programs had compared outcomes with/without a cash transfer arm

What are the research questions?

- Can a community-based group mentoring program for rural young adolescent girls
 - Safeguard them from sexual violence?
 - Help them remain in school?
 - Lead to safer sexual experiences?
- Does adding a cash transfer to a girl group mentoring program make a difference?

Sexual violence shrinks girls' worlds at puberty

Spatial access by sex and age in one community (South Africa)



Source: Kelly Hallman, Nora Kenworthy, Judith Diers, Nick Swan, Bashi Devnarain. 2015. "The Shrinking World of Girls at Puberty: Violence and Gender-Divergent Access to the Public Sphere among Adolescents in South Africa," *Global Public Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice*, Vol 10(3): 279-295. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2014.964746>

Can skills and social support through girl group mentoring be protective for girls?

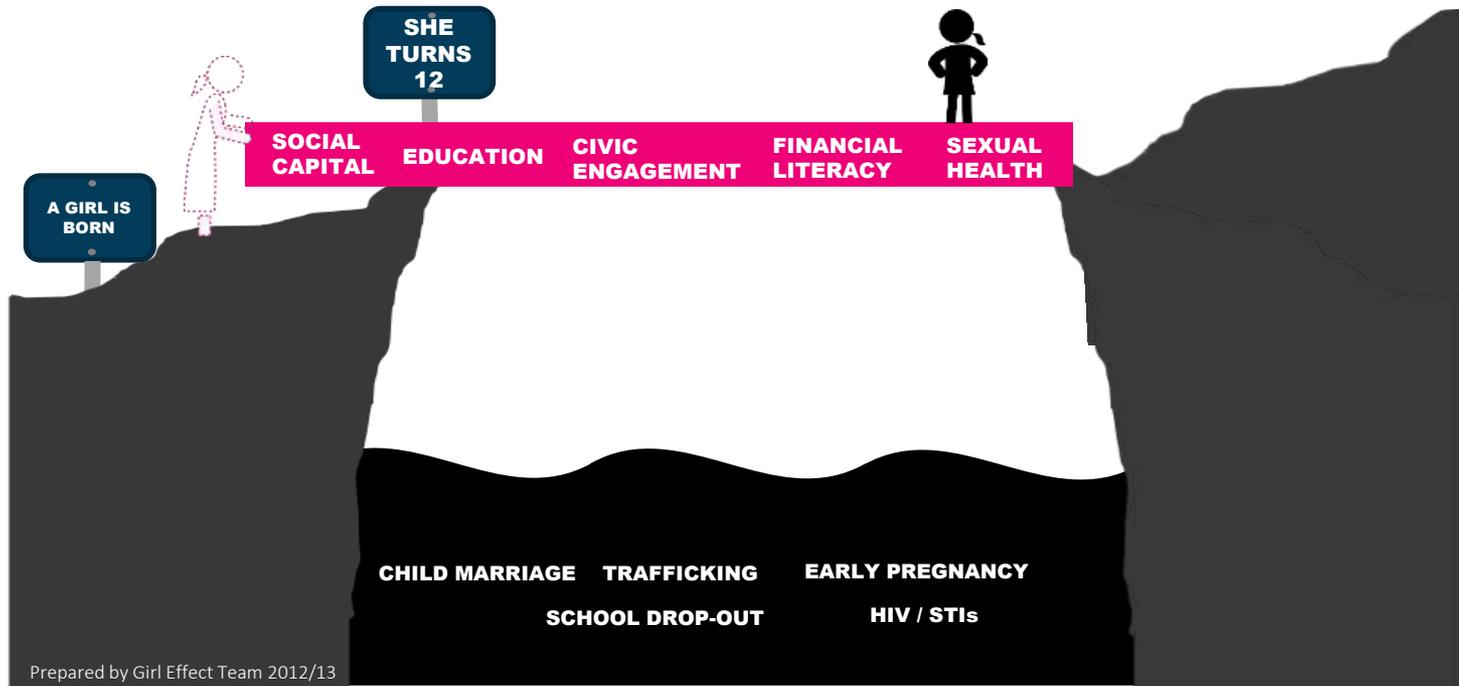
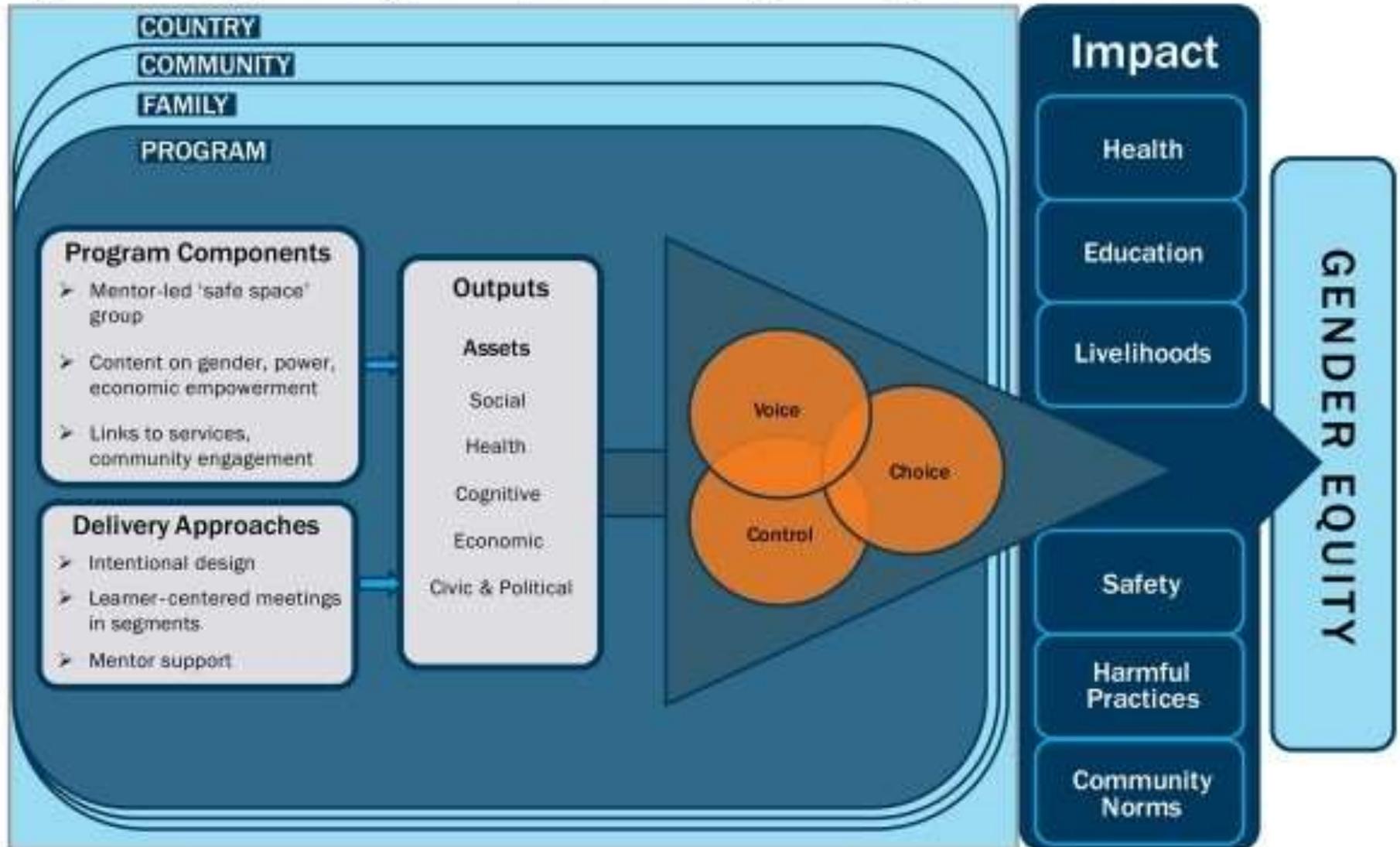


Figure 1: Theory of Change for Empowerment Programming for Adolescent Girls



[Miriam Temin, Sajeda Amin, Thoai D. Ngo, & Stephanie Psaki, "How to Give Adolescent Girls Voice, Choice, and Control," Stanford Social Innovations Review. Dec 2018.](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/how_to_give_adolescent_girls_voice_choice_and_control)

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Project location: Nimba County



GE intervention components

- Weekly mentored meetings for rural girls aged 13-14 in safe spaces for 11 months
- Monthly facilitated meetings with caregivers for 8 months
- Cashbox and starter savings for every girl (\$2/mo x 9 mo = \$18.00)
- Monthly cash to caregivers based on girl's weekly attendance (\$1.25/session x 32 sessions = \$40.00)

Girl Empower Session Themes

32 weekly girl sessions

- Module 1 – Me and the Girl Empower Group
- Module 2 – Friends/Family/Support Network
- Module 3 – Communication/Goals
- Module 4 – My Body/Health
- Module 5 – Safety/Well-Being
- Module 6 – Money/Financial Plan
- Module 7 – My Girl Empower Community Event

8 parent sessions

- “Protection through Positive Parenting and Caretaking”

GE study design

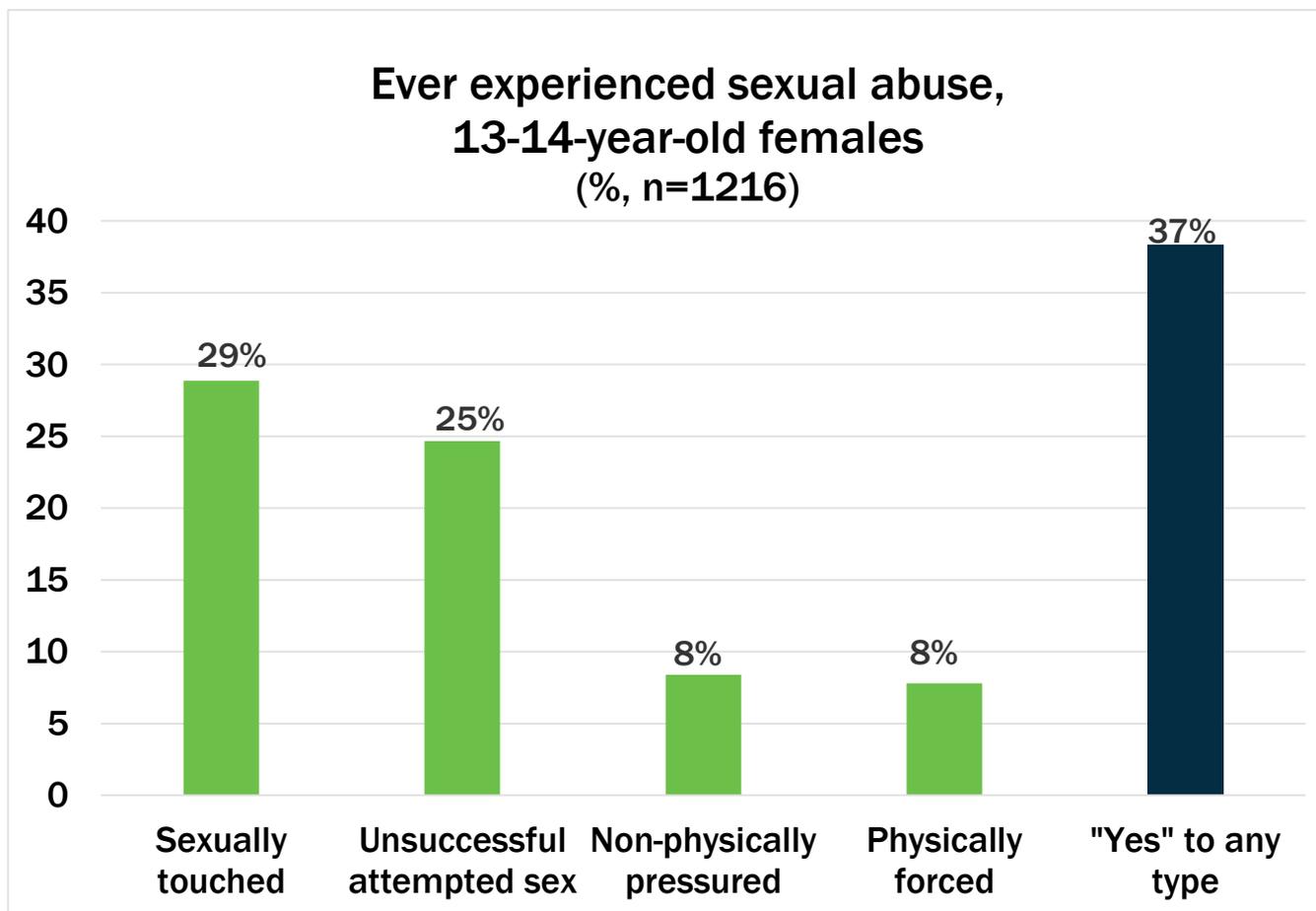
- 84 villages randomly assigned to one of 3 study arms (28 villages per arm)
 - Control, GE, and GE+cash
- Village-level saturation recruiting for intervention
 - Villages of size 500 to 2000
 - All 13-14 girls in village

Study methods

- Household listing (10 minutes)
- Guardian permission
- Girl assent
- Longitudinal girl survey (45 minutes)
 - Girl designates caregiver
- Caregiver consent
- Longitudinal survey to girl-designated caregiver (15 minutes)

- Verbal face-to-face interviews on tablet
- VACS style questions on sexual violence

What we found at baseline



Source: Kelly Hallman; Elizabeth Kelvin, Berk Ozler, Juliette Seban, Erica Kuhlik, Cooper Alton, Joseph Kamara, Sarah Goodman. 2016. *Combining mentoring programs with cash transfers for adolescent girls in Liberia: baseline report*. Policy Research working paper; no. WPS 7797. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/603331471362228178/Combining-mentoring-programs-with-cash-transfers-for-adolescent-girls-in-Liberia-baseline-report>

Girl Empower Liberia baseline versus VACS

Any sexual abuse sex in past 12 months	
Girl Empower Liberia (13-14-year-olds)	33%
Swaziland VACS (13-17-year-olds)	28%
Tanzania VACS (13-17-year-olds)	14%
Kenya VACS (13-17-year-olds)	11%
Zimbabwe VACS (13-17-year-olds)	9%

Source: Kelly Hallman; Elizabeth Kelvin, Berk Ozler, Juliette Seban, Erica Kuhlik, Cooper Alton, Joseph Kamara, Sarah Goodman. 2016. *Combining mentoring programs with cash transfers for adolescent girls in Liberia: baseline report*. Policy Research working paper; no. WPS 7797. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.
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Girls' attendance

- 771 surveyed girls registered for the GE groups
 - 46 from baseline not found at program start;
 - 0 refused to join
- 94.5% of girls attended between 24 to 32 GE weekly sessions
- 5.4% of girls attended between 1 to 23 GE weekly sessions
- 771 girls attended 22,901 total weekly sessions

Caregiver attendance

- 771 caregivers trained in collaborative decision making and positive problem resolution
- 771 caregivers attended 5,817 sessions (mean of 7.5 out of 8 possible)

Cash distribution: Savings for all GE & GE+ girls' Conditional to GE+ parents

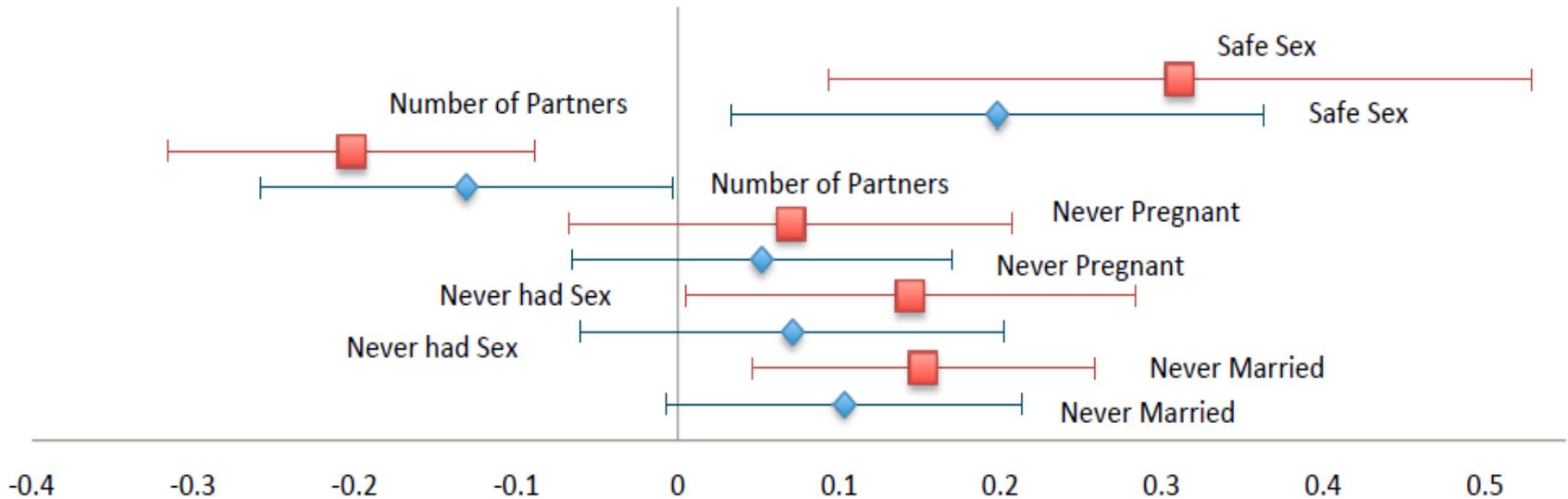
- No mobile money
 - Financial services subcontractor hired to administer payments
- Not all parents showed up to get cash in a timely manner
- Some GE caregivers unhappy they were not eligible for cash
- Some GE+ caregivers upset girl did not chose them as designated caregiver for sessions/cash
 - Early community consultations by IRC helped reduce the latter two problems

Program impacts

- Follow-up rate: girls, 97%, caregivers, 96%
- Sizable and statistically significant impact on *Sexual Experience/Marriage Index* (and most components)
 - GE: β , 0.244 SD, $p < 0.01$; GE+: β , 0.372 SD, $p < 0.01$; F-test for GE=GE+: $p = 0.075$
 - Sexual abstinence, number of sexual partners, condom use, pregnancy, child marriage
- Small and not statistically significant impacts on Sexual Violence and Schooling Indices

Intent to treat: Average treatment effects

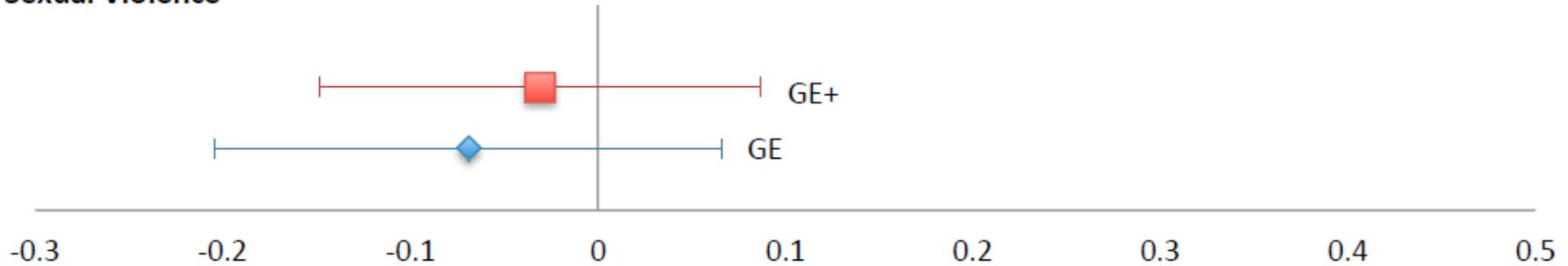
Sexual experience, marriage



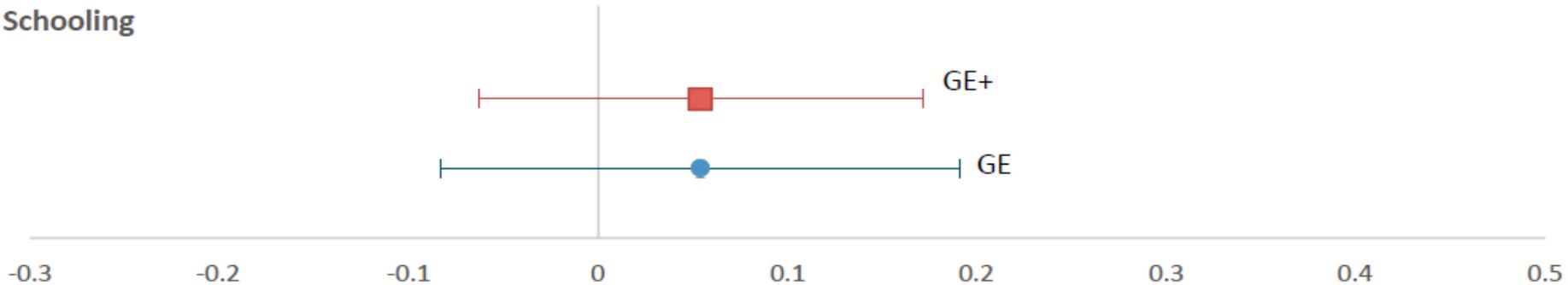
Note: Standard deviation treatment effect size and 95% confidence intervals.

Intent to treat: Average treatment effects

Sexual Violence



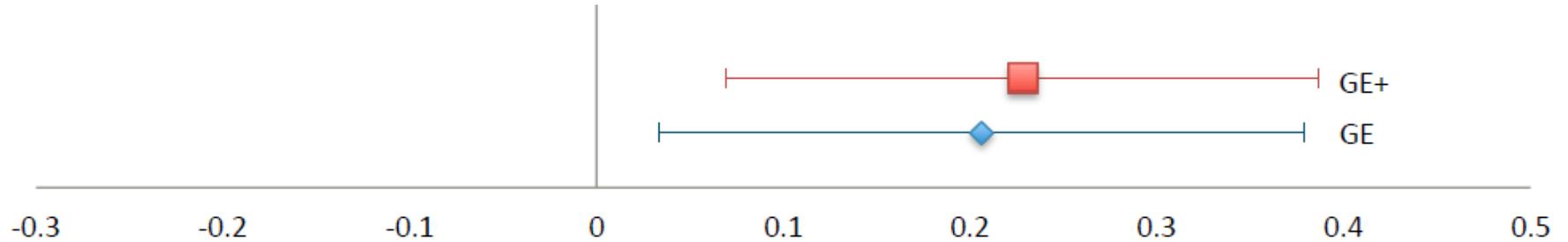
Schooling



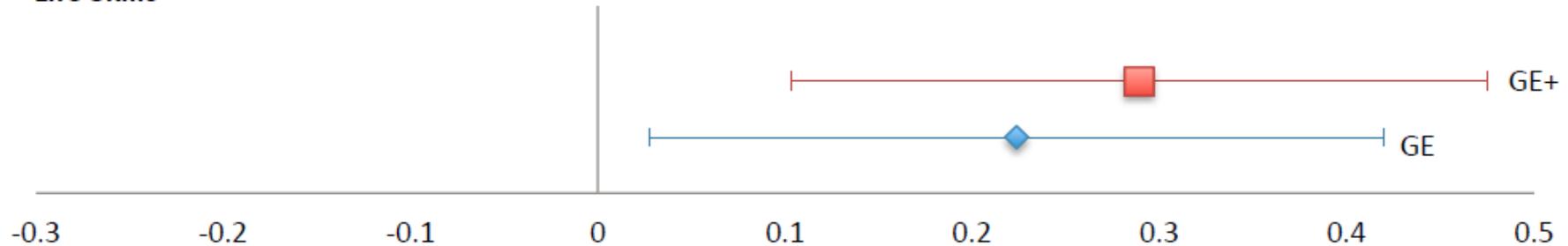
Note: Standard deviation treatment effect size and 95% confidence intervals.

Intent to treat: Average treatment effects

Gender Norms



Life Skills



Note: Standard deviation treatment effect size and 95% confidence intervals.

What worked & what did not?

- Cash transfers to caregivers tied to girls' program attendance enhanced the impact of *Girl Empower* on delaying child marriage and increasing the safety of girls' sexual encounters
 - Not via increased program attendance
 - Nor through girls staying in school
 - Perhaps through a pure income effect

What worked & what did not?

- No impact of GE or GE+ on girls' school attendance or grade advancement between rounds
- No impact of GE or GE+ on girls' experience of sexual violence
 - Perhaps because protective factors – girls' social networks, caregiver gender attitudes, caregiver aspirations for their girls – were not impacted

Conclusion/Implications

- Girl Empower itself had important impacts
- Cash increased the child marriage prevention and safer sexual experience effects by ~50%
- The GE program & cash impacts persisted one year after the intervention ended
- Could the life-skills (financial skills, HIV & condom knowledge) and attitudinal changes that the girls gained help them avoid SV later on?