



EVIDENCE REVIEW

ENHANCING WOMEN'S AGENCY: CROSS-CUTTING LESSONS FROM EXPERIMENTAL AND QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

This publication summarizes a review paper on interventions that improve women's agency, "What works to enhance women's agency: Cross-cutting lessons from experimental and quasi-experimental studies" by Wei Chang (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Eleonora Guarnieri (ifo Institute), Seema Jayachandran (Northwestern University), Lucía Díaz-Martin (J-PAL), Akshara Gopalan (J-PAL), and Claire Walsh (J-PAL).

OVERVIEW AND POLICY ISSUES

Women and girls lack agency in many contexts around the world. Compared to men, women in low- and middle-income countries, on average, have less freedom of choice, control over their life, say in household decision-making, and lower life satisfaction.¹ At the institutional level, social norms around early marriage, having sons versus daughters, domestic and unpaid care work, and women's role in the workforce and politics further limit women's opportunities compared to men.¹⁻³

This review defines women's agency as their ability to set goals and act on them, to make decisions that matter to them, and to participate in the economy and public life.^{4,5} A woman's agency is limited if she does not believe in her own worth, has a limited role in household decisions, cannot decide on her own where to go and when, or if she suffers from violence. Meanwhile, a woman can gain and express agency in various

domains of her life, including within her family, through engaging in economic activities and participating in political and community decision-making. Although agency is inherently multifaceted, much of the existing evidence synthesis focuses on one intervention type or outcome (e.g., economic empowerment). This review analyzes approaches that cut across different domains to improve women's agency.

Supporting women to be agents is largely considered to be a key component of reducing gender inequality. It is important to understand what approaches are effective in enhancing women's agency comprehensively across multiple domains and why. This review focuses on evidence that cuts across the many ways in which women can express agency, drawing from quantitative evidence to summarize research on interventions that aim to support women's agency.

KEY LESSONS

Gender norms surrounding women's agency limit the impacts of many interventions that aim to support and empower women.

Access to financial resources alone, without addressing household dynamics or gender norms, does not consistently improve women's agency.

Programs that give women access to resources are more likely to be successful in improving women's agency if they use design features that give women more control over those resources.

For young women, some economic interventions were effective in delaying the timing of marriage and childbearing. Changing household dynamics after marriage seems more challenging.

Programs designed to relieve multiple constraints that women face are frequently effective in improving women's agency. These programs often include elements that raise awareness of gender dynamics or develop soft or life skills. However, more research is needed on cost-effectiveness along with which program elements drive impacts and how.

Some approaches that improve women's agency across multiple domains include the following: 1) adolescent girls' programs that enhance girls' soft and life skills; 2) laws that mandate gender equality by protecting women's property rights, removing labor restrictions, or guaranteeing women's representation in politics; 3) cash and in-kind transfer programs that enhance women's agency in marriage and childbearing decisions or protect women against violence; and 4) the intensive, multifaceted "Graduation" approach originally developed by the nongovernmental organization (NGO) BRAC.

Photos: Cover, 6, 7 Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment; 2, 8, 11 Juan Arredondo/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment; 10 Paula Bronstein/Getty Images/Images of Empowerment



MEASURING AND DEFINING AGENCY

Drawing from existing literature on women’s agency and empowerment, this review uses a framework consisting of direct and indirect indicators of agency.⁵⁻¹¹ **Direct indicators** of agency are fundamental to a woman’s ability to make meaningful choices and to act on them. However, the precise manifestations of agency will always vary between individuals. **Indirect indicators** of agency are outcomes that may result from women exercising agency. Yet, since they may not fully capture a woman’s ability to make meaningful choices and act on them, indirect indicators serve as proxy measures.⁵ This review identifies four direct indicators of agency and seven indirect indicators of agency across three key domains:

DIRECT INDICATORS OF AGENCY



“Power within”

Internal belief in one’s worth and ability,⁵ measured through aspirations, self-efficacy, and attitudes about gender norms. Related to a woman’s belief in her ability to set goals and act on them,⁴ some of these measures are considered subjective and focus on women’s own perceptions of agency.⁹



Household decision-making

A woman's participation in household decisions on a range of topics (e.g., spending money, visiting family/friends, health care for themselves and their children).



Freedom of movement

A woman’s ability to choose where to go and when, a key manifestation of agency.



Freedom from violence

A woman’s ability to live free of emotional, physical, or sexual violence, which embody an extreme limitation of a woman’s agency. Measured through experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) or violence against adolescent girls.

SELECTED INDIRECT INDICATORS OF AGENCY ACROSS THREE DOMAINS

FAMILY DOMAIN



Timing of marriage and childbearing



Contraceptive use

ECONOMIC DOMAIN



Labor force participation



Income generation from entrepreneurship

POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY DOMAIN



Participation in politics and community decision-making



Voting behavior



Participation in groups and ties in the community

Note: This review adapted existing frameworks by Laszlo et al. (2017); Kabeer (1999); Malhotra and Schuler (2002); Ibrahim and Alkire (2007); Alkire et al. (2013); and Quisumbing, Rubin, and Sproule (2016) to develop this list of direct and indirect indicators of agency.

APPROACHES TO IMPROVING WOMEN’S AGENCY

This review synthesizes evidence from 160 papers that evaluated interventions that either targeted women and girls or aimed to improve women’s agency in low- and middle-income countries.^a The document is structured according to the direct and indirect indicators of agency and describes whether and how different interventions led to changes in women’s agency. This review also summarizes major trends across these indicators and interventions to distill findings that cut across the different areas in which women can gain and express agency.^b

TABLE 1. INTERVENTIONS INCLUDED IN THIS REVIEW

	INTERVENTION TYPE	DESCRIPTION
GENERAL	Information sharing	Providing information on key issues in a targeted manner, either through inviting a specific audience to receive information or through de facto geographic targeting (e.g., paper/leaflets that have limited geographic reach).
	Mass media intervention	Providing information on key issues in a nontargeted manner (i.e., general audience received information) through mass media channels (e.g., public screening of video, radio, television).
	Community mobilization	Capacity-building efforts through which community members plan and carry out community-wide activities on a participatory and sustained basis, usually with gender-related objectives (e.g., series of public events to educate on and reduce street harassment) or components that encourage women’s participation (e.g., participatory groups to empower women to demand better health care services).
	Engaging men	Targeting men in programs with gender equality objectives (e.g., discussions, trainings, financial groups).
TRAINING	Technical skills	Training programs emphasizing business, financial, or vocational skills and knowledge required for employment or entrepreneurship; sometimes including an apprenticeship or internship and linkages to formal employers.
	Empowerment/life/soft skills	Training programs emphasizing women’s and girls’ ability to thrive in the world via empowerment, including psychosocial skills (e.g., locus of control and self-efficacy), soft skills (e.g., negotiation and goal setting), and life skills (e.g., reproductive health). Often cover many topics simultaneously.
	Adolescent girls programs	Training programs geared toward adolescent girls’ skills acquisition, often delivered in a “safe space” model in an after-school setting with a peer leader and mentor. Can include components such as microcredit or vocational training.

^a Given the large body of public health and medical literature, this literature review excluded studies that evaluated the effects of behavioral change interventions or health care services on women’s health.

^b For specific findings related to each indicator of agency, see [Chang et al. 2020](#).

	INTERVENTION TYPE	DESCRIPTION
ECONOMIC	Microcredit	Providing small loans through banks or NGOs to be repaid with interest, either through communal group banking or through individual credit.
	Savings	Access to savings vehicles through bank accounts, savings groups, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), or Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). The latter three involve women managing lending groups that pool savings, typically outside of formal banking systems, and also include elements of mutual support and social relationships.
	Business grants	Providing cash or in-kind support to businesses with the intention to support productive investments.
	Transfers	Providing cash or in-kind support to households with the intention to support household consumption or expenses. Conditional transfers either require the funds to be used for specific purposes or require certain conditions to be fulfilled prior to disbursement; unconditional transfers have no such requirements. In-kind transfers can be in the form of food or other consumables.
	Access to jobs	Programs to increase access to employment opportunities, such as access to recruitment services, job offers, or wage subsidies.
	Multicomponent interventions	Programs that include a combination of the aforementioned interventions, e.g., the Graduation approach developed by the NGO BRAC (a program that combines multiple components designed to provide a “big push” to unlock the poverty trap, including a productive asset transfer, technical trainings, consumption support, access to savings, and life skills or health information training).
OTHER	Land and property regulations	Laws and regulations that protect women’s rights to own, acquire, and manage tangible or intangible properties (e.g., land, housing, bank accounts).
	Gender quotas	Laws and regulations that reserve a defined proportion or number of seats for women in political or community representation.
	Access to childcare	Policies and programs that provide families with affordable access to childcare services.

RESULTS

I. Gender norms surrounding women's agency limit the impacts of many interventions that aim to support and empower women.

While this finding is not surprising, many of the studies in this review offer empirical evidence across intervention types and outcome areas confirming what many scholars and practitioners have previously documented. Social norms related to gender limit the effectiveness of many interventions that target women. For example, loans and business training had limited success for women-owned enterprises in Pakistan, as social norms expected women to run businesses from home and to have limited interactions with people outside of the household.¹² In addition, women business owners in India, Ghana, and Sri Lanka did not benefit from programs that provided microcredit or business grants if other members of their household also owned businesses. Women may have directed their financial resources to men's businesses rather than their own, driven in part by the social norm that expect husbands to earn more than wives.¹³

Gender prejudices against women playing a role in public life can limit the impact of interventions aimed at increasing women's participation in politics and community decision-making. In India, gender quotas for women in local government bodies, which increased women's representation in politics and community decision-making, also changed community attitudes about women candidates' ability to win elections.^{14–16} However, electoral victories by women political leaders did

not have sustained impacts on women's subsequent political participation in areas with high levels of gender prejudice.¹⁷ Norms related to how women should behave in public may also prevent women's meaningful participation in community decision-making. In Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo, requiring women's participation in decision-making processes for community-driven development increased women's meeting attendance but did not encourage them to speak more at the meetings.^{18,19}

Information interventions may also fail due to restrictive gender norms that prevent women from acting on information. In China, sharing information with women about voter rights increased their knowledge about voting but did not affect their voting behavior, potentially due to social restrictions related to women's mobility and voting.^{20,21} In Uganda, an information intervention describing how women should be included in community-driven development inadvertently highlighted the fact that women had been systematically excluded, which further discouraged women's participation in public life.²²

Restrictive social norms that dictate women's key life cycle decisions and their role in society can impede interventions from having transformative impacts on women's agency. For example, an adolescent girls empowerment program in Bangladesh had no impact on girls' age of marriage, perhaps because the program did not change the social norm that parents made decisions about their daughters' marriage.³ In addition, providing women's partners and other family members with information about the benefits and safety of women's employment did not increase female labor force participation in India, a setting with restrictive norms about women working outside the home.²³

Evidence base: 18 papers

II. Access to financial resources alone, without addressing household dynamics or gender norms, does not consistently improve women's agency. Cash and in-kind transfers offer one exception.

Overall, access to financial resources through microcredit, savings groups, and business grants had limited impacts on women's income generation from entrepreneurship and mixed impacts on employment.^{13,24–31} The lack of consistent impacts can be partially explained by household dynamics. For example, women in Uganda who reported that their partners did not treat them well did not experience economic gains from access to bundled services including a business grant, while women who did not report being treated poorly by their partners doubled their income.²⁹ Evidence from India, Ghana, and Sri Lanka indicates that women diverted credit or business loans provided to them to their spouses or other businesses in the household, which may explain why women-owned businesses did not benefit from access to financial resources.¹³ Access to financial resources through jobs and employment, microcredit,



Accra, Ghana. Informal workers at Makola Market association meeting led by Juliana Brown Afari at Makola Market.



Tororo, Uganda. Women from the Kaku women's group weaving baskets. The income from selling the baskets in local markets helps the women to support their families and pay the school fees for their children.

and savings groups did not consistently increase household decision-making power for women in the experimental and quasi-experimental studies we reviewed.^{12,24,26,28,31–38} In contrast, cash and in-kind transfers did increase women's agency in some domains. For example, access to conditional cash transfers enhanced women's decision-making power in Mexico, Uruguay, and Ecuador (but not Colombia).^{39–42} However, more research is needed, as the survey questions used to measure decision-making were frequently associated with the cash transfer conditions that parents had to meet to receive the funds (e.g., children's schooling). Various kinds of transfers (in-kind, conditional, or unconditional) were also effective in reducing IPV through increasing women's power in the home or alleviating economic stress.^{43–46} For younger women, transfers delayed the timing of marriage through encouraging girls to stay in school longer or alleviating families' economic pressure, which may have compelled them to marry girls early.^{3,47–51}

Evidence base: 32 papers

III. Programs that give women resources are more likely to be successful in improving women's agency if they use design features that give women more control over those resources.

Transferring funds to women's accounts through direct deposits or mobile payments gave women more control over financial resources and improved economic outcomes. In India, depositing wage payments for a federal workfare program directly to women's bank accounts coupled with training on the benefits of the accounts increased women's labor market participation. The program also enhanced women's ability

to travel to common places, like markets and health centers, and led women to hold more liberal attitudes toward women's work. Researchers posited that strengthening women's control over their income by depositing wages in bank accounts enhanced their bargaining power and enabled them to push back against restrictive gender norms.⁵²

Along the same lines, mobile payments, relative to cash, offered privacy and enabled women to protect their resources and maintain control over their use.^{53,54} For instance, providing cash transfer payments through mobile money instead of cash increased women's participation in economic activities in Niger.⁵⁴ Likewise, in Uganda, distributing loans to female borrowers through mobile money increased business profits by 15 percent relative to cash.⁵³

In some settings, savings accounts that offered commitment devices or were costly to access protected women's control over financial resources against the demands of others, especially among women with low levels of decision-making power in the household. In the Philippines, access to a commitment savings account, which restricted withdrawals until the funds reached a prespecified amount or date, increased women's control over household decisions related to spending on children. These commitment savings accounts were particularly effective for women who had lower levels of decision-making power at the start of the program.⁵⁵ In rural Kenya, women market vendors used their zero-interest accounts despite large withdrawal fees, but few men used similar accounts that were offered to them. One possible explanation is that the relatively high withdrawal fees helped women protect their funds against pressures to share resources with family or friends.⁵⁶ Similarly, in Kenya, women with low levels of decision-making power relative to

their spouse stopped using their bank accounts when they were offered ATM cards that increased the accessibility and reduced the costs of using savings accounts.⁵⁷

Some of the approaches outlined above helped women exercise agency by circumventing family members in immediate, daily decisions. However, such strategies of concealment can take a psychological toll on women and are unlikely to fundamentally alter power dynamics based on gender. For example, offering women in Zambia private access to contraceptives increased women's contraceptive use by giving them more control to act on their fertility goals relative to women who were offered contraceptives while their partners were present.⁵⁸ However, offering contraceptives to women in private lowered women's self-reported health and happiness, suggesting that concealing contraceptive use from the partner could have caused marital conflict.⁵⁸ In Uganda, women reported anecdotally that their businesses offered a way to increase their autonomy and independence, but this was only possible if family members did not know the true size of their business.⁵⁹ More research is needed on programs that actively seek to change power dynamics within the household.

Evidence base: 8 papers

IV. For young women, some economic interventions were effective in delaying the timing of marriage and childbearing. Changing household dynamics in the context of marriage seems more challenging.

For young women, decisions about marriage and childbearing can be responsive to economic interventions, such as access to employment and cash or in-kind transfers. In India, access to job opportunities through recruitment services substantially changed women's fertility preferences, increased their participation in the labor market, and delayed marriage and childbearing.³⁶ In Bangladesh, exposure to increased job opportunities in the garment sector through the arrival of nearby garment factories was associated with lower likelihood of early marriage and childbirth, due to older girls postponing marriage to work and younger girls staying in school.⁶⁰ Various in-kind and cash transfer models were also effective in delaying marriage and childbearing among adolescent girls in Bangladesh, Malawi, Pakistan, and Kenya.^{3,47,48,50,51} In Malawi, however, the effects of unconditional cash transfers were temporary and did not last after the transfers were discontinued.⁴⁹

Nonetheless, most economic approaches did not consistently lead to positive impacts on women's household decision-making after marriage.^{12,24,26,28,31–38} This suggests that it may be more challenging to enhance women's agency within a marriage relative to their agency in the decision about when to marry. Further research is needed to identify effective approaches to change household dynamics within a marriage.

Evidence base: 19 papers

V. Programs designed to relieve multiple constraints that women face appear to be effective in improving women's agency. These programs often included elements that raised awareness about gender dynamics or developed participants' soft or life skills. However, more research is needed on cost-effectiveness along with which program elements are driving impacts and through what mechanisms.

Many programs that bundled together multiple intervention components enhanced several aspects of women's and girls' lives and improved their agency along several dimensions. For example, the intensive, multicomponent Graduation approach developed by the NGO BRAC, which provided a productive asset, consumption assistance, skills training, savings, and/or mentorship, led to sustained positive changes in income, consumption, and political participation among women living in extreme poverty in most contexts where it has been tested (e.g., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, and Pakistan).^{61–63} Programs designed for adolescent girls often bundled various types of trainings (e.g., vocational, technical, and empowerment, life, or soft skills) and sometimes microcredit in a “safe space” setting where school-age girls could interact with peers and mentors. While these programs had inconsistent impacts on marriage and childbearing, they improved some elements of “power within,” social relationships, and economic empowerment later in life.^{3,64–70}

Economic interventions, such as microcredit, transfers, and savings groups, coupled with trainings, discussions, or coaching to explicitly address gender dynamics were effective in improving women's agency by increasing “power within,”^{971–73} enhancing freedom of movement,^{3,73} reducing IPV,^{33,72,74} increasing participation in collective action,⁷⁵ and strengthening social ties.^{33,73,75,76} Business trainings with components aimed at developing soft skills or addressing gender-specific constraints, such as self-confidence, gender equality, and self-efficacy, were effective in improving women's business outcomes in the majority of evaluations.^{77–80} For example, women in societies that strictly regulate women's social interactions often have limited social networks. In India, business training with a friend helped strengthen women's support networks and thus increased business incomes among women who faced the most caste-based social restrictions.⁸¹ However, no study directly tested business trainings that address gender-specific constraints against a standard business training module.

Across these bundled interventions, it is important to question whether offering multiple components is necessary to achieve impacts, and if so, to what extent the benefits of delivering each component are greater than the costs. For example, in six out of the seven countries where the Graduation approach was implemented, researchers found that the estimated benefits for households were greater than the costs.^{62,63} Studies of



Bihar, India. A teacher uses interactive tools to explain reproductive health systems to a classroom of unmarried adolescent girls.

interventions similar to the Graduation approach in Ghana and Uganda also suggest that the multicomponent nature was critical: providing access to financial resources alone, such as transfers or savings accounts, did not generate economically meaningful and cost-effective impacts in the way that the integrated packages did.^{82,83} Understanding the comparative cost-effectiveness of programs with various intensity levels is important to help inform policymakers considering different programming options in contexts with limited resources.

Evidence base: 30 papers

VI. Adolescent girls’ programs, laws that mandate gender equality, cash and in-kind transfer programs, and the Graduation approach are among the most effective approaches to improve women’s agency across multiple domains.

Adolescent girls’ programs provided various kinds of training, sometimes combined with economic resources, in a classroom or after-school setting. These trainings typically focused on developing life or soft skills such as negotiation, persuasion, resilience, reproductive health, and long-term planning. There is strong evidence that these programs improved girls’ “power within”— specifically, self-efficacy or attitudes about gender in Kenya, Bangladesh, Liberia, Ethiopia, India, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Haiti, and Zimbabwe.^{2,3,64,65,67,70,84–90} The majority of the evaluations of adolescent girls’ programs also found positive impacts on other meaningful outcomes, such as girls’ schooling, labor market participation, income-generating activities, and ties in the community, despite mixed impacts on marriage

and childbearing decisions.^{3,64–67,69,70,84,85,89,91} However, implementation details and context were important to the success of a program. For example, an adolescent girls’ program in Tanzania did not improve “power within,” income generation, fertility preferences, or social ties, which researchers attributed to the fact that local implementers faced challenges adhering to the program model (e.g., holding sessions in the same location every week, replacing materials as they were worn).⁶⁶

Evidence base: 15 papers

Laws that protected women’s property rights had positive impacts on women’s agency in multiple areas. For example, equal inheritance property laws in India, which allowed women to have equal shares as men in ancestral property prior to marriage, were associated with greater educational attainment, delayed marriage, and increased employment for women.^{92–94} In Ethiopia, expanding wives’ access to marital property and removing restrictions on working outside the home were associated with improved occupational choices, particularly for unmarried young women, perhaps due to the availability of better economic opportunities.⁹⁵ In China, which has a high prevalence of sex-selective abortions due to son preference, a legal reform that protected women’s property rights after divorce was associated with more girls among second-born children, indicating married women’s greater influence over fertility decisions.⁹⁶

Gender quotas that mandated women’s representation in local politics and community decision-making had sustained impacts



Lima, Peru. Silvenia Bari is a fish vendor in a street market in the local municipality of Independencia.

on women's political agency, along with "power within" and agency in marriage decisions. Electoral quotas for women in India had long-term positive impacts on women's political participation and women's electoral success in subsequent elections.^{14,15,97} Importantly, these political gender quotas also increased girls' aspirations,⁹⁸ improved attitudes toward female leaders,^{14,15} and reduced child marriage.⁹⁹ In contrast, gender quotas were not as effective in changing gender norms or increasing women's participation in public life when applied to community-driven development projects,^{16,18,19} potentially because these gender quotas were not backed by government-sponsored, institutional, or legal mandates.¹⁹

Evidence base: 17 papers

Cash and in-kind transfers were effective in reducing IPV, but these effects rarely persisted after the transfers ended. Some studies indicate that cash transfers decreased IPV by alleviating poverty-related stress and reducing women's tolerance for violence. Cash, vouchers, or food transfers reduced emotional, physical, and sexual IPV in Ecuador.⁴³ Unconditional cash transfers reduced physical violence in South Africa⁴⁵ and physical and sexual violence in Kenya.⁴⁶ However, these positive effects were not universal: women in Bangladesh only experienced positive impacts when the transfers were

combined with a nutrition training program.⁴⁴ In addition, while more educated women in Ecuador experienced a reduction in emotional violence after receiving a cash transfer, lower-educated women who had as much or more education than their partners experienced an increase in emotional violence as a result of the transfer.^{43,100} This finding illustrates the need to understand whether and how certain subgroups of women experience negative impacts as a result of access to transfers.

Conditional and unconditional transfers for adolescent girls in the form of cash, vouchers, and/or food also increased girls' agency in marriage and childbearing. A cash transfer program conditional on girls' school attendance delayed marriage in Pakistan.⁴⁸ Another cash transfer program in Malawi, conditional on school enrollment, delayed marriage only for girls who were out of school before the transfer was implemented.⁴⁷ Unconditional transfers also reduced marriage and childbearing while they were in place in Malawi⁴⁹ and reduced pregnancy among vulnerable children in Kenya.⁵¹ Similarly, an in-kind transfer program that provided girls with school uniforms reduced marriage and childbearing in Kenya.⁵⁰ In Bangladesh, an in-kind transfer program reduced child marriage while it was in place.³ Prolonging girls' education and reducing family financial pressures that may have led to marriage or dropping out of school are two potential explanations for these impacts.

Evidence base: 11 papers

The NGO BRAC's Graduation approach is an intensive, multifaceted intervention that often provides a productive asset, consumption assistance, skills training, savings, and/or mentorship over a limited period of time. This program, or similar models, led to sustained positive changes in income, consumption, and household assets two years after the asset transfer in Afghanistan; three years after the asset transfer in Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Pakistan, and Peru; and four years after the asset transfer in Bangladesh.^{61–63} The intervention also increased women's political participation and awareness across all countries. Nonetheless, there were no long-term impacts on women's household decision-making.^{61–63}

Evidence base: 3 papers

In the full review, we provide evidence synthesis for each direct and indirect indicator of women's agency. Below are a few examples of indicator-specific takeaways—click through for more details and to read more takeaways from each section of the review:



“Power within”: Adolescent girls' programs that included soft and life skills training, sometimes bundled with other interventions, improved girls' self-efficacy and confidence and reduced their acceptance of restrictive gender norms.



Household decision-making: The economic interventions reviewed (microcredit, savings, unconditional transfers, and multicomponent poverty alleviation programs) had mixed and inconsistent impacts on women's household decision-making. However, a small number of studies found that improving property rights laws and the justice system's capacity to address domestic violence improved women's influence over family decisions.



Freedom of movement: Most studies in which an intervention improved freedom of movement did not identify how exactly this effect occurred. However, two studies found that increasing women's power in the home through control over financial resources was also effective in improving women's freedom of movement, suggesting that this channel should be explored further.



Freedom from violence: Women's access to cash and food transfers decreased experiences of IPV in the short run (though one study documented increases in emotional violence for some women). Reducing poverty-related stress and tolerance for violence are potential explanations for these impacts. Access to microcredit, savings groups, or employment did not lead to similar results.



Timing of marriage and childbearing: Overall, interventions that changed perceptions about girls' abilities and opportunities or increased the educational and economic opportunities available to them encouraged girls and young women to delay pregnancy.



Contraceptive use: Giving women more direct control in family planning by providing privacy, life skills training, and more options in contraceptive products, or by encouraging more gender-equitable attitudes among men increased women's agency in contraceptive use.



Labor force participation: Providing access to free or subsidized childcare increased women's labor market participation in Indonesia, Kenya, and parts of Latin America.



Income generation from entrepreneurship: Business training programs varied greatly in program design and had mixed impacts on earnings. Successful programs often included gender equality content or addressed gender-specific constraints such as agency, soft skills, or social networks.



Participation in politics and in community decision-making: The Graduation approach increased women's participation in politics and community decision-making in several contexts.



Voting behaviors: There is suggestive evidence that information sharing programs that aimed to encourage voting among women were not successful due in part to restrictive gender norms.



Participation in groups and ties in the community: Several studies suggest that women's SHGs either increased or strengthened women's ties in the community and participation in other groups in South Asia.

CONCLUSIONS

This review attempts to connect the dots between various domains, intervention types, and mechanisms to distill learnings on what approaches are effective in enhancing women's agency. The rigorous evidence reviewed suggests the following:

Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers should intentionally address the constraints that women face when designing interventions. Programs should be designed to address power imbalances and social inequalities based on gender.

Gender norms play an important role in moderating or even limiting the intended intervention impacts. For this reason, access to resources alone, without addressing gender-specific constraints, is often not an effective mechanism for enhancing women's agency.

Programs that offer resources might be more successful if they employ design features (e.g., digital accounts, privacy features) to give women more control over those resources. Nonetheless, design features that enable women to hide decisions from their spouses likely do not offer long-term solutions to the very power imbalances that require women to shield their possessions or conceal their choices.

Bundled programs that address multiple constraints women face, often including soft or life skills, appear effective in improving multiple indicators of women's agency. However, more research is needed to understand costs, which mechanisms generate positive outcomes, and whether the full package of services is required.

Adolescent girls' programs, laws that mandate equality, cash and in-kind transfers, and the Graduation approach are effective interventions in enhancing multiple indicators of women's agency.

Opportunities to enhance women's agency change over a woman's life cycle. The timing of marriage and childbearing for young women offer key margins for improvements. It appears more challenging to alter household decision-making dynamics within a marriage.

AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should develop and test programs and policies that aim to shift—rather than accommodate—individual attitudes and collective norms about gender that perpetuate inequality. Mass media interventions, which can be scaled at relatively low costs, may be a promising approach,^{101–103} but future research is needed to explore how to use mass media interventions to shift attitudes toward gender norms, including, but not limited to, attitudes toward gender-based violence.

In general, more research is needed to test mechanisms through which interventions have worked and to evaluate long-run impacts after interventions end, especially for bundled programs. Other research priorities include better understanding the cost-effectiveness of bundled programs along with the role of soft skills in generating positive impacts on women's agency. How to improve relationships and power dynamics between individuals that consciously or unconsciously constrain women's and girls' agency (e.g., partners, parents, extended family members) remains another area for future research.

Experimenting with and validating metrics for household decision-making, psychological outcomes, and gender-based violence are important for future research efforts. As metrics are refined, other open questions remain: What is the relationship between elements of “power within” and other aspects of women's agency like labor force or political participation? What kinds of interventions can enhance married women's decision-making power? What kinds of interventions successfully reduce women's time spent on unpaid care and domestic work?

ABOUT J-PAL

The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) is a global research center working to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. Anchored by a network of 194 affiliated professors at universities around the world, J-PAL conducts randomized impact evaluations to answer critical questions in the fight against poverty.

FOR FURTHER READING

This evidence review is an executive summary of work by Wei Chang, Lucía Díaz-Martin, Akshara Gopalan, Eleonora Guarnieri, Seema Jayachandran, Claire Walsh: [“What works to enhance women's agency: Cross-cutting lessons from experimental and quasi-experimental studies.”](#)

Evidence Review Author: Wei Chang | **Editor:** Lucía Díaz-Martin

Suggested Citation: J-PAL Evidence Review. 2020. “Enhancing women's agency: Cross-cutting lessons from experimental and quasi-experimental studies in low- and middle-income countries.” Cambridge, MA: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Jayachandran, Seema. 2015. "The Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries." *Annual Review of Economics* 7 (1): 63–88. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-080614-115404>.
2. Dhar, Diva, Tarun Jain, and Seema Jayachandran. 2018. "Reshaping Adolescents' Gender Attitudes: Evidence from a School-Based Experiment in India." NBER Working Paper 25331. National Bureau of Economic Research.
3. Buchmann, Nina, Erica Field, Rachel Glennerster, Shahana Nazneen, Svetlana Pimkina, and Iman Sen. 2018. "Power vs Money: Alternative Approaches to Reducing Child Marriage in Bangladesh, a Randomized Control Trial." Working Paper.
4. Donald, Aletheia, Gayatri Koolwal, Jeannie Annan, Kathryn Falb, and Markus Goldstein. 2017. "Measuring Women's Agency." Policy Research Working Paper 8184. World Bank Group.
5. Kabeer, Naila. 1999. "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment." *Development and Change* 30: 435–464.
6. Malhotra, Anju, and Sidney Ruth Schuler. 2002. "Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development." Background Paper Prepared for the World Bank Workshop on Poverty and Gender: New Perspectives. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
7. Ibrahim, Solava, and Sabina Alkire. 2007. "Agency and Empowerment: A Proposal for Internationally Comparable Indicators." *Oxford Development Studies* 35 (4): 379–403. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600810701701897>.
8. Alkire, Sabina, Ruth Meinzen-Dick, Amber Peterman, Agnes Quisumbing, Greg Seymour, and Ana Vaz. 2013. "The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index." *World Development* 52 (December): 71–91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.06.007>.
9. Quisumbing, Agnes, Deborah Rubin, and Katie Sproule. 2016. "Subjective Measures of Women's Economic Empowerment." http://www.womeneconroadmap.org/sites/default/files/Wms%20Entrepreneurship_rev_clean.pdf.
10. Laszlo, Sonia, Kate Grantham, Ecem Oskay, and Tingting Zhang. 2017. "Grappling with the Challenges of Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment." Research Contribution Paper 2017–12. Institute for the Study of International Development.
11. Kabeer, Naila. 2005. "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal 1." *Gender and Development* 13 (1): 13–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552070512331332273>.
12. Said, Farah, Mahreen Mahmud, Giovanna D'adda, and Azam Chaudhry. 2019. "Home-Bias among Female Entrepreneurs: Experimental Evidence on Preferences from Pakistan." Working Paper.
13. Bernhardt, Arielle, Erica Field, Rohini Pande, and Natalia Rigol. 2019. "Household Matters: Revisiting the Returns to Capital among Female Micro-Entrepreneurs." Working Paper.
14. Bhavnani, Rikhil R. 2009. "Do Electoral Quotas Work after They Are Withdrawn? Evidence from a Natural Experiment in India." *The American Political Science Review* 103 (01): 23–35. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055409090029>.
15. Beaman, Lori, Raghendra Chattopadhyay, Esther Duflo, Rohini Pande, and Petia Topalova. 2009. "Powerful Women: Does Exposure Reduce Bias?" *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124 (4): 1497–1540. <https://doi.org/10.1162/qjec.2009.124.4.1497>.
16. Beath, Andrew, Fotini Christia, and Ruben Enikolopov. 2013. "Empowering Women through Development Aid: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan." *The American Political Science Review* 107 (3): 540–557.
17. Bhalotra, Sonia, Irma Clots Figueras, and Lakshmi Iyer. 2018. "Pathbreakers? Women's Electoral Success and Future Political Participation." *The Economic Journal* 128 (613): 1844–1878. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eoj.12492>.
18. Casey, Katherine, Rachel Glennerster, and Edward Miguel. 2012. "Reshaping Institutions: Evidence on Aid Impacts Using a Preanalysis Plan." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127 (4): 1755–1812. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qje027>.
19. Windt, Peter van der, Macartan Humphreys, and Raul Sanchez de la Sierra. 2018. "Gender Quotas in Development Programming: Null Results from a Field Experiment in Congo." *Journal of Development Economics* 133 (July): 326–345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2018.02.006>.
20. Pang, Xiaopeng, Junxia Zeng, and Scott Rozelle. 2013. "Does Women's Knowledge of Voting Rights Affect Their Voting Behaviour in Village Elections? Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial in China." *The China Quarterly* 213 (March): 39–59. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741012001531>.
21. Pang, Xiaopeng. 2014. "Learning but Not Acting in Rural China." *Asian Survey* 54 (6): 1009–1036. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2014.54.6.1009>.
22. Buntaine, Mark T, Brigham Daniels, and Colleen Devlin. 2018. "Can Information Outreach Increase Participation in Community-Driven Development? A Field Experiment Near Bwindi National Park, Uganda." *World Development* 106: 407–421.
23. Dean, Joshua T, and Seema Jayachandran. 2019. "Changing Family Attitudes to Promote Female Employment." *American Economic Association Papers and Proceedings* 109 (May): 138–142.
24. Banerjee, Abhijit, Esther Duflo, Rachel Glennerster, and Cynthia Kinnan. 2015. "The Miracle of Microfinance? Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 7 (1): 22–53.
25. Attanasio, Orazio, Britta Augsburg, Ralph De Haas, Emla Fitzsimons, and Heike Harmgart. 2015. "The Impacts of Microfinance: Evidence from Joint-Liability Lending in Mongolia." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 7 (1): 90–122.
26. Baro, Mamadou, Lori Beaman, James Greenberg, and Dean Karlan. 2013. "Final Impact Evaluation of the Saving for Change Program in Mali, 2009–2012." Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, University of Arizona.

27. Ksoll, Christopher, Helene Bie Lilleør, Jonas Helth Lønborg, and Ole Dahl Rasmussen. 2016. "Impact of Village Savings and Loan Associations: Evidence from a Cluster Randomized Trial." *Journal of Development Economics* 120 (May): 70–85. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2015.12.003>.
28. Karlan, Dean, Beniamino Savonitto, Bram Thuysbaert, and Christopher Udry. 2017. "Impact of Savings Groups on the Lives of the Poor." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 114 (12): 3079–3084. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1611520114>.
29. Green, Eric P., Christopher Blattman, Julian Jamison, and Jeannie Annan. 2015. "Women's Entrepreneurship and Intimate Partner Violence: A Cluster Randomized Trial of Microenterprise Assistance and Partner Participation in Post-Conflict Uganda (SSM-D-14-01580R1)." *Social Science and Medicine* 133 (May): 177–188. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.03.042>.
30. Fiala, Nathan. 2018b. "Returns to Microcredit, Cash Grants and Training for Male and Female Microentrepreneurs in Uganda." *World Development* 105 (May): 189–200. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.12.027>.
31. Angelucci, Manuela, Dean Karlan, and Jonathan Zinman. 2015. "Microcredit Impacts: Evidence from a Randomized Microcredit Program Placement Experiment by Compartamos Banco." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 7 (1): 151–182.
32. Ikenwilo, Divine, Damilola Olajide, Olufemi Obembe, Ngozi Ibeji, and Rufus Akindola. 2016. "The Impact of a Rural Microcredit Scheme on Women's Household Vulnerability and Empowerment: Evidence from South West Nigeria." Working Paper 2016–01. Partnership for Economic Policy.
33. Kim, Julia, Giulia Ferrari, Tanya Abramsky, Charlotte Watts, James Hargreaves, Linda Morison, Godfrey Phetla, John Porter, and Paul Pronyk. 2009. "Assessing the Incremental Effects of Combining Economic and Health Interventions: The IMAGE Study in South Africa." *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 87 (11): 824–832. <https://doi.org/10.2471/blt.08.056580>.
34. Prillaman, Soledad. 2017. "Strength in Numbers: How Women's Groups Close India's Political Gender Gap." Working Paper.
35. Beaman, Lori, Dean Karlan, and Bram Thuysbaert. 2014. "Saving for a (Not so) Rainy Day: A Randomized Evaluation of Savings Groups in Mali." NBER Working Paper 20600. National Bureau of Economic Research.
36. Jensen, Robert. 2012. "Do Labor Market Opportunities Affect Young Women's Work and Family Decisions? Experimental Evidence from India." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127 (2): 753–792. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjs002>.
37. Kotsadam, Andreas, and Espen Villanger. 2019. "Jobs and Intimate Partner Violence: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Ethiopia." Working Paper.
38. Hoffmann, Vivian, Vijayendra Rao, Vaishnavi Surendra, and Upamanyu Datta. 2017. "Relief from Usury: Impact of a Community-Based Microcredit Program in Rural India." Policy Research Working Paper 8021. World Bank Group.
39. Bergolo, Marcelo, and Estefanía Galván. 2018. "Intra-Household Behavioral Responses to Cash Transfer Programs: Evidence from a Regression Discontinuity Design." *World Development* 103 (March): 100–118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.10.030>.
40. Lopez-Arana, Sandra, Mauricio Avendano, Frank J. van Lenthe, and Alex Burdorf. 2016. "The Impact of a Conditional Cash Transfer Programme on Determinants of Child Health: Evidence from Colombia." *Public Health Nutrition* 19 (14): 2629–2642. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980016000240>.
41. Feldman, Becca S., Alan M. Zaslavsky, Majid Ezzati, Karen E. Peterson, and Marc Mitchell. 2009. "Contraceptive Use, Birth Spacing, and Autonomy: An Analysis of the Oportunidades Program in Rural Mexico." *Studies in Family Planning* 40 (1): 51–62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4465.2009.00186.x>.
42. Handa, Sudhanshu, Amber Peterman, Benjamin Davis, and Marco Stampini. 2009. "Opening up Pandora's Box: The Effect of Gender Targeting and Conditionality on Household Spending Behavior in Mexico's Progresa Program." *World Development* 37 (6): 1129–1142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2008.10.005>.
43. Hidrobo, Melissa, Amber Peterman, and Lori Heise. 2016. "The Effect of Cash, Vouchers, and Food Transfers on Intimate Partner Violence: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment in Northern Ecuador." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 8 (3): 284–303. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20150048>.
44. Roy, Shalini, Melissa Hidrobo, John Hoddinott, and Akhter Ahmed. 2019. "Transfers, Behavior Change Communication, and Intimate Partner Violence Post-Program Evidence from Rural Bangladesh." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 101 (5): 865–877. https://doi.org/10.1162/rest_a_00791.
45. Kilburn, Kelly N., Audrey Pettifor, Jessie K. Edwards, Amanda Selin, Rhian Twine, Catherine MacPhail, Ryan Wagner, James P. Hughes, Jing Wang, and Kathleen Kahn. 2018. "Conditional Cash Transfers and the Reduction in Partner Violence for Young Women: An Investigation of Causal Pathways Using Evidence from a Randomized Experiment in South Africa (HPTN 068)." *Journal of the International AIDS Society* 21 Suppl 1 (February). <https://doi.org/10.1002/jia2.25043>.
46. Haushofer, Johannes, Charlotte Ringdal, Jeremy Shapiro, and Xiao Yu Wang. 2019. "Income Changes and Intimate Partner Violence: Evidence from Unconditional Cash Transfers in Kenya." NBER Working Paper 25627. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w25627>.
47. Baird, Sarah, Ephraim Chirwa, Craig McIntosh, and Berk Özler. 2010. "The Short-Term Impacts of a Schooling Conditional Cash Transfer Program on the Sexual Behavior of Young Women." *Health Economics* 19 Suppl (September): 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hec.1569>.
48. Alam, Andaleeb, Javier E. Baez, and Ximena V. Del Carpio. 2011. "Does Cash for School Influence Young Women's Behavior in the Longer Term? Evidence from Pakistan." Policy Research Working Paper 5669. The World Bank.

49. Baird, Sarah, Ephraim Chirwa, Craig McIntosh, and Berk Özler. 2015. "What Happens Once the Intervention Ends? The Medium-Term Impacts of a Cash Transfer Programme in Malawi." 3ie Impact Evaluation Report 27. New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).
50. Duflo, Esther, Pascaline Dupas, and Michael Kremer. 2015. "Education, HIV, and Early Fertility: Experimental Evidence from Kenya." *American Economic Review* 105 (9): 2757–2797. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20121607>.
51. Handa, Sudhanshu, Amber Peterman, Carolyn Huang, Carolyn Halpern, Audrey Pettifor, and Harsha Thirumurthy. 2015. "Impact of the Kenya Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children on Early Pregnancy and Marriage of Adolescent Girls." *Social Science and Medicine* 141 (September): 36–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.07.024>.
52. Field, Erica, Rohini Pande, Natalia Rigol, Simone Schaner, and Charity Troyer Moore. 2019. "On Her Account: Can Strengthening Women's Financial Control Boost Female Labor Supply?" NBER Working Paper 26294. National Bureau of Economic Research.
53. Riley, Emma. 2018. "Hiding Loans in the Household Using Mobile Money: Experimental Evidence on Microenterprise Investment in Uganda." Working Paper.
54. Aker, Jenny C., Rachid Boumnijel, Amanda McClelland, and Niall Tierney. 2016. "Payment Mechanisms and Antipoverty Programs: Evidence from a Mobile Money Cash Transfer Experiment in Niger." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 65 (1): 1–37. <https://doi.org/10.1086/687578>.
55. Ashraf, Nava, Dean Karlan, and Wesley Yin. 2010. "Female Empowerment: Impact of a Commitment Savings Product in the Philippines." *World Development* 38 (3): 333–344. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2009.05.010>.
56. Dupas, Pascaline, and Jonathan Robinson. 2013. "Savings Constraints and Microenterprise Development: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Kenya." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 5 (1): 163–192. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.5.1.163>.
57. Schaner, Simone. 2017. "The Cost of Convenience? Transaction Costs, Bargaining Power, and Savings Account Use in Kenya." *Journal of Human Resources* 52 (4): 919–945. <https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.52.4.0815-7350R1>.
58. Ashraf, Nava, Erica Field, and Jean Lee. 2014. "Household Bargaining and Excess Fertility: An Experimental Study in Zambia." *American Economic Review* 104 (7): 2210–2237. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.104.7.2210>.
59. Fiala, Nathan. 2018a. "Business Is Tough, but Family Is Worse: Household Bargaining and Investment Decisions in Uganda." Working Paper.
60. Heath, Rachel, and A. Mushfiq Mobarak. 2015. "Manufacturing Growth and the Lives of Bangladeshi Women." *Journal of Development Economics* 115 (July): 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2015.01.006>.
61. Bedoya, Guadalupe, Aidan Coville, Johannes Haushofer, Mohammad Isaqzadeh, and Jeremy Shapiro. 2019. "No Household Left Behind Afghanistan Targeting the Ultra Poor Impact Evaluation." Policy Research Working Paper 8877. World Bank Group.
62. Banerjee, Abhijit, Esther Duflo, Nathanael Goldberg, Dean Karlan, Robert Osei, William Parienté, Jeremy Shapiro, Bram Thuysbaert, and Christopher Udry. 2015. "A Multifaceted Program Causes Lasting Progress for the Very Poor: Evidence from Six Countries." *Science* 348 (6236): 1260799. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1260799>.
63. Bandiera, Oriana, Robin Burgess, Narayan Das, Selim Gulesci, Imran Rasul, and Munshi Sulaiman. 2017. "Labor Markets and Poverty in Village Economies." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 811–870.
64. Bandiera, Oriana, Niklas Buehren, Robin Burgess, Markus Goldstein, Selim Gulesci, Imran Rasul, and Munshi Sulaiman. 2020. "Women's Empowerment in Action: Evidence from a Randomized Control Trial in Africa." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 12 (1): 210–259. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.20170416>.
65. Bandiera, Oriana, Niklas Buehren, Markus Goldstein, Imran Rasul, and Andrea Smurra. 2018. "The Economic Lives of Young Women in the Time of Ebola: Lessons from an Empowerment Program." Working Paper.
66. Buehren, Niklas, Markus Goldstein, Selim Gulesci, Munshi Sulaiman, and Venus Yam. 2017. "Evaluation of an Adolescent Development Program for Girls in Tanzania." Policy Research Working Paper 7961. World Bank Group.
67. Scales, Peter C., Peter L. Benson, Larry Dershem, Kathleen Fraher, Raphael Makonnen, Shahana Nazneen, Amy K. Syvertsen, and Sarah Titus. 2013. "Building Developmental Assets to Empower Adolescent Girls in Rural Bangladesh: Evaluation of Project Kishoree Kontha." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 23 (1): 171–184.
68. Leventhal, Katherine Sachs, Lisa M. DeMaria, Jane E. Gillham, Gracy Andrew, John Peabody, and Steve M. Leventhal. 2016. "A Psychosocial Resilience Curriculum Provides the 'Missing Piece' to Boost Adolescent Physical Health: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Girls First in India." *Social Science and Medicine* 161 (May): 37–46. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.05.004>.
69. Stark, Lindsay, Khudejha Asghar, Ilana Seff, Gary Yu, Teame Tesfay Gessesse, Leora Ward, Asham Assaznew Baysa, Amy Neiman, and Kathryn L. Falb. 2018. "Preventing Violence against Refugee Adolescent Girls: Findings from a Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial in Ethiopia." *BMJ Global Health* 3 (5): e000825. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2018-000825>.
70. Amin, Sajeda, Johana Ahmed, Jyotirmoy Saha, Irfan Hossain, and Hossain Eashita. 2016. "Delaying Child Marriage through Community-Based Skills-Development Programs for Girls: Results from a Randomized Controlled Study in Rural Bangladesh." Population Council.

71. Pronyk, Paul M., James R. Hargreaves, Julia C. Kim, Linda A. Morison, Godfrey Phetla, Charlotte Watts, Joanna Busza, and John DH. Porter. 2006. "Effect of a Structural Intervention for the Prevention of Intimate-Partner Violence and HIV in Rural South Africa: A Cluster Randomised Trial." *The Lancet* 368 (9551): 1973–1983. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(06\)69744-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(06)69744-4).
72. Gupta, Jhumka, Kathryn L. Falb, Heidi Lehmann, Denise Kpebo, Ziming Xuan, Mazedra Hossain, Cathy Zimmerman, Charlotte Watts, and Jeannie Annan. 2013. "Gender Norms and Economic Empowerment Intervention to Reduce Intimate Partner Violence against Women in Rural Côte d'Ivoire: A Randomized Controlled Pilot Study." *BMC International Health and Human Rights* 13 (November): 46. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-698X-13-46>.
73. Jejeebhoy, Shireen J. K. Santhya, Rajib Acharya, A. J. Francis Zaviera, Neelanjana Pandey, Santosh Kumar Singh, Komal Saxena, et al. 2017. "Empowering Women and Addressing Violence against Them through Self-Help Groups (SHGs)." New Delhi: Population Council.
74. Ismayilova, Leyla, Leyla Karimli, Eleni Gaveras, Alexice To-Camier, Jo Sanson, Josh Chaffin, and Rachel Nanema. 2018. "An Integrated Approach to Increasing Women's Empowerment Status and Reducing Domestic Violence: Results of a Cluster-Randomized Controlled Trial in a West African Country." *Psychology of Violence* 8 (4): 448.
75. Pronyk, Paul M., Trudy Harpham, Joanna Busza, Godfrey Phetla, Linda A. Morison, James R. Hargreaves, Julia C. Kim, Charlotte H. Watts, and John D. Porter. 2008. "Can Social Capital Be Intentionally Generated? A Randomized Trial from Rural South Africa." *Social Science and Medicine* 67 (10): 1559–1570. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2008.07.022>.
76. Kim, Julia, Charlotte H. Watts, James R. Hargreaves, Luceth X. Ndhlovu, Godfrey Phetla, Linda A. Morison, Joanna Busza, John DH. Porter, and Paul Pronyk. 2007. "Understanding the Impact of a Microfinance-Sased Intervention on Women's Empowerment and the Reduction of Intimate Partner Violence in South Africa." *American Journal of Public Health* 97 (10): 1794–1802.
77. Bulte, Erwin, Robert Lensink, and Nhung Vu. 2017. "Do Gender and Business Trainings Affect Business Outcomes? Experimental Evidence from Vietnam." *Management Science* 63 (9): 2885–2902. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2016.2472>.
78. Valdivia, Martín. 2015. "Business Training plus for Female Entrepreneurship? Short and Medium-Term Experimental Evidence from Peru." *Journal of Development Economics* 113 (March): 33–51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdevco.2014.10.005>.
79. McKenzie, David, and Susana Puerto. 2017. "Growing Markets Through Business Training for Female Entrepreneurs : A Market-Level Randomized Experiment in Kenya." Policy Research Working Paper 7993. World Bank Group.
80. Alibhai, Salman, Niklas Buehren, Michael Frese, Markus Goldstein, Sreelakshmi Papineni, and Kathrin Wolf. 2019. "Full Esteem Ahead? Mindset-Oriented Business Trainings in Ethiopia." Working Paper.
81. Field, Erica, Seema Jayachandran, Rohini Pande, and Natalia Rigol. 2016. "Friendship at Work: Can Peer Effects Catalyze Female Entrepreneurship?" *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 8 (2): 125–153. <https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20140215>.
82. Sedlmayr, Richard, Anuj Shah, and Munshi Sulaiman. 2018. "Cash-Plus: Poverty Impacts of Transfer-Based Intervention Alternatives." CSAE Working Paper 2017-15–2. Oxford: Centre for the Study of African Economies.
83. Banerjee, Abhijit, Dean Karlan, Robert Darko Osei, Hannah Trachtman, and Christopher Udry. 2018. "Unpacking a Multi-Faceted Program to Build Sustainable Income for the Very Poor." Global Poverty Research Lab Working Paper No. 12-102. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3127053>.
84. Leventhal, Katherine Sachs, Jane Gillham, Lisa DeMaria, Gracy Andrew, John Peabody, and Steve Leventhal. 2015. "Building Psychosocial Assets and Wellbeing among Adolescent Girls: A Randomized Controlled Trial." *Journal of Adolescence* 45 (December): 284–295. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2015.09.011>.
85. Adoho, Franck, Shubha Chakravarty, Dala T. Korkoyah, Mattias Lundberg, and Afia Tasneem. 2014. *The Impact of an Adolescent Girls Employment Program: The EPAG Project in Liberia*. Policy Research Working Paper. The World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-6832>.
86. Baiocchi, Michael, Benjamin Omondi, Nickson Langat, Derek B. Boothroyd, Jake Sinclair, Lee Pavia, Munyae Mulinge, Oscar Githua, Neville H. Golden, and Clea Sarnquist. 2017. "A Behavior-Based Intervention That Prevents Sexual Assault: The Results of a Matched-Pairs, Cluster-Randomized Study in Nairobi, Kenya." *Prevention Science* 18 (7): 818–827. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-016-0701-0>.
87. Stark, Lindsay, Ilana Seff, Khudejha Asghar, Danielle Roth, Theresita Bakamore, Mairi MacRae, Cecile Fanton D'Andon, and Kathryn L Falb. 2018. "Building Caregivers' Emotional, Parental and Social Support Skills to Prevent Violence against Adolescent Girls: Findings from a Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial in Democratic Republic of Congo." *BMJ Global Health* 3 (5): e000824. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2018-000824>.
88. Rodella, Aude-Sophie, Facundo Cuevas, and Bernardo Atuesta. 2015. "Haiti Adolescent Girl Initiative (AGI): Project Report." Working Paper 98201. World Bank Group.
89. Decker, Michele R., Shannon N. Wood, Esther Ndinda, Gayane Yenokyan, Jacob Sinclair, Nankali Maksud, Brendan Ross, Benjamin Omondi, and Martin Ndirangu. 2018. "Sexual Violence among Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Malawi: A Cluster-Randomized Controlled Implementation Trial of Empowerment Self-Defense Training." *BMC Public Health* 18 (1): 1341. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-6220-0>.
90. Özler, Berk, Kelly Hallman, Marie-France Guimond, Elizabeth A. Kelvin, Marian Rogers, and Esther Karnley. 2020. "Girl Empower - A Gender Transformative Mentoring and Cash Transfer Intervention to Promote Adolescent Wellbeing: Impact Findings from a Cluster-Randomized Controlled Trial in Liberia." *SSM - Population Health* 10 (April): 100527. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2019.100527>.
91. Buehren, Niklas, Shubha Chakravarty, Markus Goldstein, Vanya Slavchevska, and Munshi Sulaiman. 2017. "Adolescent Girls' Empowerment in Conflict-Affected Settings: Experimental Evidence from South Sudan." Working Paper.

92. Bose, Nayana, and Shreyasee Das. 2017. "Women's Inheritance Rights, Household Allocation, and Gender Bias." *American Economic Review* 107 (5): 150–153. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.p20171128>.
93. Deininger, Klaus, Aparajita Goyal, and Hari Nagarajan. 2010. "Inheritance Law Reform and Women's Access to Capital Evidence from India's Hindu Succession Act." Policy Research Working Paper 5338. The World Bank.
94. Sapkal, Rahul Suresh. 2017. "From Mother to Daughter: Does Equal Inheritance Property Laws Reform Improve Female Labor Supply and Educational Attainments in India?" *Asian Journal of Law and Economics* 8 (1).
95. Hallward-Driemeier, Mary, and Ousman Gajigo. 2015. "Strengthening Economic Rights and Women's Occupational Choice: The Impact of Reforming Ethiopia's Family Law." *World Development* 70 (June): 260–273. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.01.008>.
96. Sun, Ang, and Yaohui Zhao. 2016. "Divorce, Abortion, and the Child Sex Ratio: The Impact of Divorce Reform in China." *Journal of Development Economics* 120 (May): 53–69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2015.11.006>.
97. Deininger, Klaus, Songqing Jin, Hari K. Nagarajan, and Fang Xia. 2015. "Does Female Reservation Affect Long-Term Political Outcomes? Evidence from Rural India." *The Journal of Development Studies* 51 (1): 32–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2014.947279>.
98. Beaman, Lori, Esther Duflo, Rohini Pande, and Petia Topalova. 2012. "Female Leadership Raises Aspirations and Educational Attainment for Girls: A Policy Experiment in India." *Science* 335 (6068): 582–586. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1212382>.
99. Castilla, Carolina. 2018. "Political Role Models and Child Marriage in India." *Review of Development Economics* 22 (4): 1409–1431. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rode.12513>.
100. Hidrobo, Melissa, and Lia Fernald. 2013. "Cash Transfers and Domestic Violence." *Journal of Health Economics* 32 (1): 304–319. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2012.11.002>.
101. Banerjee, Abhijit, Eliana La Ferrara, and Victor Orozco. 2019. "Entertainment, Education and Attitudes Towards Domestic Violence." *AEA Papers and Proceedings* 109 (May): 133–137.
102. Green, Donald P., Anna Wilke, and Jasper Cooper. 2018. "Silence Begets Violence: A Mass Media Experiment to Prevent Violence against Women in Rural Uganda." Working Paper.
103. Ferrara, Eliana La, Alberto Chong, and Suzanne Duryea. 2012. "Soap Operas and Fertility: Evidence from Brazil." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 4 (4): 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.4.4.1>.