

No Means No Worldwide Research and Evaluation Summary

August 2026

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Since 2019, No Means No Worldwide has partnered with more than 140 local organizations in 16 countries to reach over 1.6 million young people, equipping them with critical skills to reduce their risk of sexual violence.

Results from more than 650,000 pre-post questionnaires, administered between 2019 and 2025, show consistent short-term gains in both knowledge and attitudes. Among girls, knowledge rose from 46% to 83% (+80%) and attitudes from 57% to 85% (+50%), drawn from 489,163 questionnaires. Among boys, knowledge rose from 31% to 76% (+147%) and attitudes from 49% to 83% (+69%), drawn from 168,814 questionnaires.

These are routine monitoring data, collected from participants enrolled in the 8–12-hour program. They capture short-term change in knowledge and attitudes measured immediately after the intervention.

This document summarizes the research and evaluation conducted on the No Means No program to date — from cluster-randomized controlled trials and peer-reviewed studies to qualitative research and internal pilot evaluations.

Worth Defending: No Means No Basics — results from the 90-minute curriculum pilot in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa (2026)

Evaluation Team: No Means No Worldwide, LifeLine Durban

Publication: N/A

Research question: Can an abridged 90-minute version of the No Means No curriculum, focused on mental and verbal skills, produce meaningful gains in knowledge, attitudes and self-efficacy among girls and young women?

Adaptation: NMNW developed and piloted an abridged No Means No curriculum in KwaZulu-Natal to expand access in resource-constrained settings. Worth Defending: No Means No Basics is a 90-minute, verbal and mental skills-only curriculum designed for youth aged 9 to 20. It focuses exclusively on mental and verbal skills to prevent sexual violence and does not teach physical skills. Critically, it can be delivered by social workers or others after completing a short online training, eliminating the full instructor certification requirement. LifeLine Durban piloted the curriculum in KwaZulu-Natal, marking the first time it has been implemented and evaluated anywhere.

Sample size: 12,284 female participants completed a pre-test and 11,988 completed a post-test across the iLembe and UGU districts of KwaZulu-Natal. Participants ranged in age from 9 to 28, with an average age of 17.

Timeline: October 2025 – May 2026 (second phase of the pilot).

Methodology: A pre/post questionnaire administered immediately before and after the 90-minute session, measuring three indicators: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Self-Efficacy. The questionnaire was iteratively refined across the pilot; this analysis covers the second phase, in which the updated pre/post tool was used throughout, making it the most methodologically consistent portion of the pilot. Scores represent the percentage of participants giving the desired response. Relative percent change was calculated as $(\text{Post} - \text{Pre}) \div \text{Pre} \times 100$.

Results:

- Early analysis of pre- and post-program questionnaires from 12,284 female participants demonstrated effectiveness in equipping participants with mental and verbal skills that can help them recognize, interrupt, and escape violence. Knowledge scores increased by 148%, rising from 33% to 82%; attitude scores shifted from 65% to 84% (+30%); and self-efficacy scores rose from 60% to 86% (+43%).
- The largest individual gains were on knowledge items: understanding the main goal of self-defense rose from 27% to 78%, understanding how the voice can be used for self-defense from 31% to 83%, recognizing that an attack is never the victim's fault from 36% to 83%, and recognizing that anyone can be an attacker from 40% to 84%.
- The highest post-session scores were on personal agency and boundary-setting: the right to set boundaries about how others touch or treat them reached 89% (from 70%), and that nobody has the right to touch them without permission reached 88% (from 66%).
- Confidence in specific verbal and regulatory skills rose sharply: being able to use deep breathing to stay calm and think clearly rose from 60% to 87%, and being able to be assertive and use one's voice clearly and directly rose from 61% to 88%. Across all eleven questionnaire items, the average proportion giving the desired response rose from 52% to 84% (+61%).
- A cost analysis found that the Worth Defending program costs approximately \$1.40 per beneficiary when implemented as an add-on program, and would likely be higher if implemented independently.
- Pravisha Dhanapalan, Director at LifeLine Durban, said that "a short, well-facilitated prevention intervention can create immediate, measurable, and meaningful change, especially when paired with strong response systems," adding that "its ability to build self-worth, confidence, and help-seeking behavior in a short time makes it both practical and impactful."

Learnings

- The pilot data suggest that the Worth Defending 90-minute model is feasible and can strengthen participants' knowledge, attitudes, and perceived self-efficacy to recognize, interrupt, and escape violent situations.
- The curriculum significantly lowers the barrier to entry for partner organizations, allowing them to reach more participants more quickly and at lower cost.
- The implementing partner prefers the full 8-hour program and suggests the 90-minute version expands access rather than replacing the full gold-standard program.



- NMNW plans to expand implementation and evaluation of this curriculum in additional contexts before scaling more broadly or making the content open source.

Study Strengths

- Very large sample — over 12,000 participants — providing precision unusual for a curriculum pilot.
- This phase used a single, consistent version of the pre/post tool throughout, avoiding the aggregation across questionnaire versions required in earlier phases of the pilot.

Study Limitations

- Pre/post design with no control or comparison group, so gains cannot be attributed causally to the curriculum.
- Outcomes are measured immediately before and after a single 90-minute session, capturing short-term change in knowledge, attitudes and perceived self-efficacy only. The design says nothing about retention over time, behavior change, or experiences of violence.
- Data come from a single implementing partner in one province, limiting generalizability to other partners and contexts.
- Attitude items show a ceiling effect, with high baseline scores that constrain the measurable gain and make percent change a weaker indicator for this domain than for knowledge.
- Participants were self-reporting to the organization delivering the program immediately after the session, which carries a risk of social desirability bias.

Recommendations

- Add follow-up measurement beyond the immediate post-test to establish whether short-term gains in knowledge and perceived self-efficacy are retained.
- Evaluate the 90-minute curriculum in other contexts.
- Consider revising the attitude items, which show a pronounced ceiling effect, so the instrument can detect change among participants who already hold favorable attitudes at baseline.

Disability-inclusive violence prevention: Participatory evaluation of the No Means No pilot for adolescents with and without disabilities in Sofala Province, Mozambique (2026)

Evaluation Team: Girl Child Rights (GCR), Light for the World (LFTW), No Means No Worldwide

Publication: N/A — participatory evaluation report prepared by GCR

Research question: How effective, well-received, and operationally viable is the No Means No program in Sofala province — and to what extent does it succeed in including adolescents with disabilities?

Context: The pilot ran within the InPower Project (Inclusive Empowerment of Women and Girls with Disabilities), implemented by GCR with Light for the World and funded by ADA, in response to high rates of sexual violence in the implementation communities — particularly against adolescent girls with disabilities, who combine exposure to violence with barriers to accessing health, justice and protection services. The program is designed to reach adolescents with and without disabilities, and is facilitated by NMN Apprentices trained by GCR with technical support from NMNW.

Sample size: 155 participants across five pilot schools in Nhamatanda district and Beira city: 127 adolescents in 11 focus group discussions, 19 NMN Apprentices/facilitators in 5 focus group discussions, and 9 institutional stakeholders in individual interviews.

Timeline: Facilitators were trained in February and implementation began the following July, a five-month gap. Evaluation fieldwork was conducted 16–20 June 2026.

Methodology: A qualitative, participatory evaluation with three sources — adolescents, facilitators and institutional stakeholders. Focus groups were conducted separately by gender and, where relevant, by disability status. Data were collected in KoboToolbox and analyzed through inductive thematic analysis.

Results:

- Participants and facilitators described improvements in consent and self-advocacy. One facilitator observed that “participants were asking for consent from each other; they were respecting each other,” and a girls’ focus group participant said, “If a classmate touches me or does something I don’t like, I will say no.”
- Stakeholders described greater confidence in help-seeking, with an education official noting that “girls now know how to report, and they share information with others.” However, none of the five pilot schools recorded a reported case of violence during implementation, and one facilitator group did not know how to refer a disclosure — a protection gap the evaluation treats as an immediate priority. Knowledge of how to report should not be read as evidence that reporting increased.
- A school director described a shift in peer attitudes toward students with disabilities, and an associated decline in peer violence, over the course of the program: “Before, they mocked people with disabilities and discriminated against them, sometimes even violating them... it was normal for them to fight during any longer breaks. But over time, things have changed for the better.”
- The inclusive intent of the program was recognized and valued by participants and stakeholders. One focus group participant described it as “breaking barriers between people with and without disabilities — everyone has the opportunity to defend themselves,” and a gender focal point at another school expressed enthusiasm for the program “because it is inclusive,” stating she would like to become an instructor.
- Physical self-defense components, which require adequate space, were sometimes moved to temporary or outdoor settings when classrooms were unavailable — flagged by school directors and facilitators as a quality concern.
- These findings rest on participant and observer accounts collected after the intervention, with no baseline for comparison. The evaluation characterizes the reported behavior change as a strong indication rather than quantifiable proof of impact.

Learnings

- The number of children living with disabilities in each class was lower than expected, limiting reach and the data available to assess the disability-specific impact of the program.
- Age-cutoff flexibility was needed, since students with disabilities were often older than their same-grade peers and did not meet the original eligibility criteria.
- The absence of sign language interpreters and adapted materials limited the full participation of adolescents with hearing and visual impairments, and provincial education officials identified inclusive teaching materials as a condition for sustainability.

- Institutional buy-in mattered. Schools where principals actively set fixed days and times for sessions saw noticeably better outcomes. The highest drop-out was observed where activities were scheduled outside school hours, among predominantly male groups in the most schedule-constrained schools.
- Longer sessions facilitated accessibility but also contributed to drop-out.
- Gaps between facilitator certification and program start, driven by the school calendar, led to some loss of content retention among facilitators before implementation.

Study Strengths

- Triangulation across three independent informant groups, allowing convergences and divergences between adolescents, facilitators and stakeholders to be tested.
- Strong ethical protocol including informed consent, anonymization, and activation of GCR's case management protocol where participants disclosed violence.

Study Limitations

- The evaluation is post-intervention only, with no baseline, so findings on knowledge and behavior change rest on self-report and cannot be quantified against a documented starting point.
- Participant records did not capture disability status, so the degree of inclusion achieved could not be systematically assessed.
- Focus groups are subject to social desirability effects; mitigation measures were adopted but residual risk remains.
- Student transfers and drop-out limited the representativeness of the adolescent sample, and the absence of a participant registration system prevents verification of completion rates.

Recommendations

- Develop adapted materials and specific facilitator training for participants with hearing, visual and motor impairments, in collaboration with NMNW and LFTW.
- Introduce flexibility in age eligibility criteria to accommodate students with disabilities who are older than their same-grade peers, and make capture of disability data mandatory so that claims about inclusion rest on systematic evidence.
- Reduce session duration from 90 to 60 minutes and secure adequate indoor space for the physical self defense components as part of each school's entry protocol.
- Formalize an entry protocol with each school administration setting fixed days, times and spaces, and schedule sessions within school hours to reduce drop-out.
- Allow no more than four weeks between facilitator certification and the start of implementation and include a content refresher immediately beforehand.
- Ensure bilingual facilitators and local-language glossaries in multilingual districts, engage parents and community leaders before each cycle, and produce facilitation guides for teachers and gender focal points to support sustainability.

Insights from Teacher-Led Delivery of No Means No in Zimbabwe (2026)

Evaluation Team: Zimbabwe Health Interventions (ZHI), No Means No Worldwide

Publication: N/A — NMNW impact brief drawing on ZHI’s evaluation of the No Means No program, 2022–2024

Research question: Is teacher-led classroom delivery of the No Means No program a viable alternative to the standard community instructor-led model, and could it be integrated into the formal education system?

Context: Between 2021 and 2024, ZHI delivered the No Means No program to more than 103,500 young people in Zimbabwe. Alongside the standard community-based instructor model, ZHI piloted training classroom teachers to facilitate the program in their own schools — NMNW’s first systematic pilot of teacher-led delivery.

Sample size: 8,074 participants aged 10–14 enrolled in the DREAMS program across 11 districts, with pre/post testing completed by over 4,000. The teacher-led pilot reached approximately 280 girls and 140 boys, against approximately 2,350 girls and 1,316 boys in the instructor-led model. Qualitative data came from 6 focus group discussions with participants and 24 in-depth interviews with facilitators (15 community-based instructors and 9 certified teachers).

Timeline: 2022–2024

Methodology: A mixed-methods, non-randomized comparison of two delivery models, combining pre/post testing on knowledge, attitudes and self-efficacy with focus group discussions and facilitator interviews. Relative percent change was calculated as $(\text{Post} - \text{Pre}) \div \text{Pre} \times 100$, averaged across items in each category.

Results:

- Teacher-led delivery proved to be a viable model. Girls taught by teachers improved on attitudes from 57% to 87% (+53%) and on knowledge from 55% to 82% (+49%); boys improved on attitudes from 53% to 77% (+45%) and on knowledge from 46% to 62% (+35%).
- Teacher-led groups achieved higher post-test scores than instructor-led groups on all four indicators, and produced the larger attitudinal shift among girls (+53% versus +47%).
- Instructor-led groups showed larger relative gains in girls’ knowledge (+70% versus +49%), boys’ knowledge (+92% versus +35%) and boys’ attitudes (+57% versus +45%). These likely reflect substantially lower starting baselines — as low as 26% for boys’ knowledge against 46% for teacher-led — suggesting instructors may be particularly effective at lifting outcomes from low starting points.
- Across both delivery modes, the proportion of girls who believed they were “worth defending” rose from roughly two-thirds at baseline to more than 80%, and the proportion of boys who felt prepared to safely intervene in conflict situations rose from 50% to 74%.
- 62 girls aged 10–14 disclosed experiences of sexual violence during the intervention period. All were referred to support services and 92% accessed them, including family planning, STI/HIV testing and prevention, and psychosocial support.

Qualitative findings:

- Girls consistently preferred teachers as facilitators, citing trust, continuity, and being able to raise personal issues privately with someone who already knew them.
- Teachers reinforced curriculum messages through ongoing school relationships and daily supervision, and their existing links to guidance counselors sped up referral following disclosure.
- Instructors brought dedicated focus and deeper program expertise and valued working across multiple schools, but found it harder to fit into school environments and to follow up on referrals without direct school relationships.
- Teachers were candid about the strain of adding the program to existing workloads, and sessions held after school strained both teachers and learners.
- Participants described a shift from passivity to active self-protection — setting boundaries, recognizing their own worth, and willingness to report violence — and applied the skills in daily life, with boys in particular moving from witnesses to active bystanders.
- Participants described the program as culturally appropriate, complementing community values rather than challenging them, and shared what they learned with peers who had not attended, extending its reach beyond the classroom.

Study Strengths



- Large evaluation cohort of 8,074 participants across 11 districts, using a mixed-methods design that combined pre/post testing with focus groups and interviews with both facilitator types.
- First systematic evaluation comparing the two delivery models within NMNW programming.

Study Limitations

- Participants were not randomly assigned to delivery models, so differences between the two should be interpreted cautiously and no causal claim can be made.
- The teacher-led pilot reached a substantially smaller group than the instructor model, so its findings are early evidence rather than definitive conclusions.
- Teacher-led groups began with higher baseline scores across all four categories, which compresses their relative gains and makes percent change a misleading basis for comparing the two models.

Recommendations

- Teacher-led delivery is a viable model that produces strong outcomes, integrates naturally with school structures, and offers advantages for sustainability and scale. As a first pilot, the findings justify further investment and study.
- Strengthen teacher-led delivery through protected time within the school timetable, incentives including transport reimbursement, refresher training and peer learning platforms, recognition for completion, and continued school-based referral infrastructure.
- Translate curriculum materials into vernacular languages (Shona, Ndebele, and others), simplify vocabulary for younger learners, and provide learning aids, IEC materials, and adequate session space.

Disability-inclusive HIV prevention: Impact of the No Means No program in preventing sexual and gender-based violence among adolescent girls and young women with disabilities in Niger State, North-Central, Nigeria (2025)

Research Team: L. Mohammed¹, H. Nuhu Dikko¹, K. Eruchalu¹, I. Pious¹, F. Mairiga², A. Abubakar³, P. Mungwari⁴, D. Stotesbury⁴, D. Magaji⁵

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Publication: *Posters Presented at the IAS Conference and SA AIDS Conference*

Research question: What is the impact of the No Means No Intervention in preventing sexual and gender-based violence among adolescent girls and young women with disabilities in Niger State, North-Central, Nigeria

Timeline: March–October 2024

Methodology:

A Disability-Inclusion Framework guided a targeted assessment to identify persons with disabilities (PWD) for HIV prevention. Following government approval, the No Means No program was implemented at the Niger State School for Special Education.

- 4 female students with hearing and speech impairment were trained as Instructors on the 10-hour No Means No curriculum.
- Supported by 4 volunteer sign-language interpreters, Instructors trained 231 students across 9 cohorts (March–October 2024).
- 5 cohorts (n=138) were sampled to measure changes in knowledge and attitudes via pre/post questionnaires, focus group discussions, and teacher interviews.
- 21 peer educators were identified and mentored to teach sexual violence prevention skills to their peers.
- The team supported survivor disclosures and established referral networks for SGBV response.

Results:

- **Knowledge** of SGBV prevention increased from 31% to 93% — an average **gain of 200%**.
- **ESD skills** improved by **433%**, from 17% to 93%.
- Positive **attitudes** toward SGBV prevention rose from 52% to 96%, an **85% improvement**.

Recommendations

- This study recommends scaling up the program and integrating disability-inclusive HIV prevention services into healthcare systems to strengthen HIV prevention efforts.

Effectiveness of an empowerment-based self-defense program among South African girls: results from a cluster-randomized control trial in schools (2025)

Research Team: M. Hartmann, S. Mutangabende, S. Nash, E. N. Browne, A. Hatcher, A. E. Kågesten, S. T. Roberts
Women's Global Health Imperative, RTI International; Karolinska Institutet; No Means No South Africa; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Publication: BMC Women's Health (2025). Mixed-methods results presented at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum 2024, Cape Town, South Africa. A fuller qualitative analysis of girls' experiences is in preparation.

Research question: What is the effectiveness of the No Means No intervention in reducing girls' reported experiences of sexual violence?

Sample size: 1,540 girls aged 10 to 19 were enrolled from 14 of the 15 randomized schools in Gqeberha, South Africa. Of the 1,507 girls enrolled at the 13 schools contributing outcome data, 1,250 provided primary outcome data and were included in the analysis. A nested qualitative component included in-depth interviews with 10 school stakeholders, one per intervention school, and with a subsample of girl participants.

Timeline: Recruitment ran from February to October 2022. Participants were followed for 12 months, with surveys at baseline, 3, 6 and 12 months.

Methodology: A hybrid type 1 effectiveness-implementation cluster-randomized controlled trial. Fifteen schools were randomized 1:1:1 to one of three arms: (1) intervention delivered to girls only, (2) intervention delivered to girls and boys separately, or (3) control. The primary outcome was girls' past-year experience of sexual violence (SV), including rape and online and offline sexual harassment. Generalized estimating equation models compared the combined intervention arms to the control, and each intervention arm to the control separately. Exploratory analyses examined secondary outcomes (rape, offline and online sexual harassment) and intermediate outcomes including knowledge, gender norms, victim-blaming attitudes, use of intervention behaviors, and confidence in reporting SV. Implementation data comprised attendance logs, quarterly implementation reports, and in-depth interviews with school stakeholders.

Data Collection: Quantitative data were collected via surveys at four timepoints, administered on paper in classrooms with questions read aloud by trained staff to ensure understanding and confidentiality. Qualitative data came from in-depth interviews with school stakeholders and with a subsample of girl participants, conducted by trained qualitative interviewers in a private location.

Results:

- Participants were on average 13 years old and 83% identified as Black.
- 35% of girls reported past-year sexual violence at baseline, and 33% reported sexual violence at least once during the 12-month follow-up period.
- During follow-up, 36% of girls in the intervention schools reported experiencing SV, compared with 25% of girls in the control arm.
- The intervention did not significantly reduce sexual violence compared with the control. Girls in the combined intervention arms had an estimated 24% higher risk of reported SV (adjRR 1.24, 95% CI 0.96–1.69; $p=0.08$).
- Analyzed separately, girls in the girls'-only intervention arm had a 39% higher risk of reporting SV than the control arm, and this difference was statistically significant (adjRR 1.39, 95% CI 1.06–1.83; $p=0.03$). Girls in the girls' and boys' arm had a 17% higher risk, which was not significant (adjRR 1.17, 95% CI 0.89–1.54; $p=0.23$). The authors hypothesize that this pattern may reflect greater willingness to disclose violence rather than increased exposure to it.
- Analyses of rape and sexual harassment separately followed the same trend as the primary analysis, with no statistically significant findings.
- Knowledge of self-defense was the only intermediary outcome that differed significantly between the intervention and control arms (coefficient 0.42, 95% CI 0.16–0.68; $p=0.007$). Analyzed by arm, significance held only for the girls' and boys' arm (coefficient 0.56, 95% CI 0.35–0.76; $p=0.001$), and the difference was statistically significant only at month 3.
- All other intermediary outcomes — gender norms, victim-blaming, use of intervention behaviors, and confidence in reporting SV — showed improved levels in the combined intervention arms compared with the control, with the exception of gender norms, but none reached statistical significance.

Qualitative findings (presented at SVRI, qualitative paper in preparation):

- Girls reported greater confidence in disclosing experiences of violence, and school stakeholders described learners who had previously hesitated becoming more willing to come forward.
- Girls described a new understanding of consent and personal boundaries and described retaining and applying the self-defense skills they had learned.
- No participant described an increased risk of sexual violence, or any unintended harm, as a result of participating in the intervention or of using the skills taught.
- Stakeholders reported improved school awareness of sexual violence and more open conversations about it, alongside reduced bullying and improved peer relationships.
- Stakeholders described shifts in school climate, with more acceptance of gender diversity and support for learners, and greater trust in NMN Social Workers as safe, neutral supports for disclosure. Some teachers felt they had learned skills themselves.
- A standalone qualitative paper examining girls' experiences of the intervention in greater depth is yet to be published.

Study Strengths

- Statistically powered cluster randomized control trial with a large, diverse sample.
- Mixed-methods design combining longitudinal outcome data with implementation and process evaluation data.

Study Limitations

- Intervention participants may have been more likely to report violence because of encouragement from the program, which could make it appear as if the intervention did not reduce SV. This interpretation is supported by the qualitative component of the study, in which both girls and school stakeholders described greater comfort with disclosure.
- Implementation challenges included limits on allotted instructional time, lack of whole-school buy-in, and rotating school schedules.
- The study was conducted in a challenging context during and following the COVID-19 pandemic, by a newly established branch of NMN. Schools were heavily focused on academic recovery, resulting in shortened NMN sessions and limited support from broader school staff.
- The trial evaluated a COVID-adapted version of the curriculum, which reduced delivery hours and placed greater emphasis on verbal over physical skills.
- Lack of refresher sessions and long gaps between the intervention and measurement of key outcomes.
- Underpowered to detect small differences due to attrition and reduced cluster size.
- Potential reporting bias: data collectors were NMN staff wearing branded clothing, which may have influenced how participants responded — either underreporting or feeling more comfortable disclosing violence.

Recommendations

- Future trials should use implementation science methods to improve delivery of ESD interventions in school settings.
- Future trials should rigorously evaluate the impact of empowerment-based interventions on disclosure, acknowledging the complexity of assessing their effects on the various facets of sexual violence.
- Future studies should measure longer-term change and explore broader outcomes beyond violence reduction, while accounting for developmental factors and increasing SV risk with age.
- As the qualitative and quantitative results do not exactly align in terms of intervention effectiveness, there is a need to refine how impact is conceptualized and measured in future ESD trials.

Prevalence of technology facilitated and other gender-based violence among adolescent girls in Gqeberha, South Africa and its association with probable common mental disorders (2025)

Research Team: M. A. Hartmann, E. Browne, S. Mutangabende, P. Mungwari, D. Stotesbury, N. Woollett, A. Kågesten, S. T. Roberts, A. Hatcher

Women's Global Health Imperative, RTI International; Karolinska Institutet; No Means No South Africa; No Means No Worldwide; University of the Witwatersrand; University of Johannesburg; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Publication: Frontiers in Global Women's Health, 9 September 2025. Earlier findings presented at ISPCAN in 2023.

Research aim: To assess the prevalence of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TF-GBV) and other forms of gender-based violence, and to explore their association with symptoms of common mental disorders (CMD — anxiety and depression), among adolescent girls in South African peri-urban townships.

Sample size: 1,540 girls aged 10–19 from 14 low-income public schools in Gqeberha, South Africa.

Methodology: Cross-sectional analysis of baseline survey data from girls enrolled in the No Means No cluster-randomized controlled trial. TF-GBV was measured using a nine-item scale drawn from two sub-scales: one for intimate partner violence-related TF-GBV and one for TF-GBV committed by an unspecified perpetrator. Depression symptoms were measured using the two-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) and anxiety symptoms using the two-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder scale (GAD-2). Generalized estimating equations were used to estimate the association between violence exposure and probable CMD, adjusting for demographics and partnership status.

Data Collection: A baseline survey was administered to participants before they received the No Means No intervention.

Results:

- The majority of participants identified as Black (84%).
- 29% of girls reported experiencing TF-GBV in the past year — 43% of secondary school girls compared with 11% of primary school girls. All forms of past-year GBV were more prevalent among secondary school girls.
- Symptoms of common mental disorder were far more prevalent among secondary school girls (37%) than primary school girls (approximately 10%).
- 56.3% of participants reported no GBV exposure. Of the remainder, the largest group had experienced both TF-GBV and other forms of GBV (25.6%), followed by other GBV only (13.8%) and TF-GBV only (3.5%).
- Girls exposed to both TF-GBV and other GBV had 3.68 times the risk of probable CMD compared with girls exposed to neither (95% CI 2.42–5.62, $p < 0.001$). Girls exposed to other GBV only had 2.98 times the risk (95% CI 2.30–3.86, $p < 0.001$). TF-GBV alone was not significantly associated with CMD (aRR 1.37, 95% CI 0.76–2.48, $p = 0.268$).
- Experience of both in-person and technology-facilitated violence is common and may lead to worse mental health outcomes than in-person violence alone.

Study Strengths

- Relatively large sample size, spanning both primary and secondary schools.
- Use of established screening instruments (PHQ-2, GAD-2) to assess probable common mental disorder.

Study Limitations

- The TF-GBV measure was developed in a high-income country setting, as no validated measures exist for low- and middle-income contexts. It may miss contextually specific forms of TF-GBV and therefore underestimate true prevalence.
- Psychological GBV was not comprehensively measured, limiting the ability to explore the relationship between psychological violence and mental health outcomes.
- Associations could not be examined by perpetrator type (partner vs. non-partner) due to limited power and measurement design, which limits guidance for programming targeting perpetrators.
- Only depression and anxiety were measured, not other common mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder or substance use disorder.
- The study was conducted among school-going adolescents, which may limit generalizability to other vulnerable adolescents.

Recommendations

- Targeted content addressing TF-GBV, and its impact on mental health, should be incorporated into existing GBV prevention programs for adolescent girls in similar contexts.



- There is an urgent need for validated TF-GBV measurement tools for low-resource settings; future research should prioritize refining the scale's psychometric properties.
- Research should capture a broader range of common mental disorders and measure prevalence at community level, beyond school-going populations.

A Comparison of Delivery Models for No Means No Programming in South Africa (2023)

Research Team: No Means No Worldwide, NACOSA

Publication: N/A

Context: The No Means No: Girls & Young Women (COVID-Safe) program is typically delivered as 8 hours of content implemented in four, 2-hour classes (standard model). To better reach their target population, NACOSA proposed implementing two adapted models: one full-day (one 8-hour class) or two half days (two 4-hour classes on consecutive days).

Research Aim: This evaluation explores the feasibility of delivering the No Means No Intervention using these adapted bootcamp models while maintaining quality, short-term outcomes, and cost-effectiveness.

Sample size: This assessment includes findings from 10 partners that implement in 7 provinces across South Africa, though not every partner participated in every data collection activity.

- NMNW staff completed a total of 19 in-person observations, or Instructor Development Visits (IDVs).
- 10 of those IDVs were selected to fill additional notes about the class observed.
- 23,601 pre-post questionnaires from NACOSA and its sub recipients (SRs) were analysed, representing approximately 11,800 girls, who received the No Means No program in January-June 2023.
- The global comparison group included 7,544 questionnaires from participants aged 15-24.
- NMNW staff conducted 6 FGDs with 38 participants (instructors and partner staff) from 5 partner organizations and 6 provinces across South Africa.

Timeline: Approximately 9 months

Methodology: The intervention delivery models were assessed using Focus Group Discussions with Instructors and partner staff, NMNW staff observations, and a pre-post questionnaire for girls aged 15-24 who received the intervention between January-June 2023. The pre-post results for different models were compared within the NACOSA framework and against global benchmarks from other regions, including participants aged 15-24 enrolled in the 8-hour No Means No: Girls & Young Women (COVID-Safe) intervention between January 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023.

Data Collection:

- **Instructor Development Visits:** Instructors were evaluated using a 17-question IDV form during site visits, assessing various skills on a 0-3 scale to compare the quality of facilitation across different delivery methods.
- **Instructor Observation Notes:** NMNW staff observed and took notes on Instructors' facilitation in different models, focusing on assessment objectives. These notes were analyzed for common themes.
- **Girl's Participant Pre-Post Questionnaire:** Focused on core competencies of the No Means No curriculum, this tool measured participants' knowledge and attitude changes with agree/disagree and multiple-choice questions. The questionnaires were administered before and after curriculum delivery to gauge short-term learning outcomes.

Results:

- Shorter class lengths led to better content completion, higher energy and engagement, and more disclosures.
- The standard model remains the best for program quality, but it is not viable in many contexts due to higher dropout rates.
- The two-day model is the ideal option to balance program quality, energy and engagement, retention, disclosures, and short-term outcomes. It was also the preferred implementation model for nearly all Instructors and partners.
- The one-day model was only preferred for reach and retention purposes, but had shortcomings in all other aspects and is not considered a quality implementation method in its current form.
- Facilitation and program quality challenges need to be addressed across all models

Study Strengths

- The study used a mix-methods methodology, exploring both quantitative and qualitative data for a holistic perspective

Study Limitations

- The study uses non-experimental methods, analyzing existing quantitative and qualitative data to identify trends and feasibility insights regarding a model, without asserting causality.
- The focus is solely on girls' programming, making the findings not directly applicable to boys' programming initiated by NACOSA and its SRs in COP22.
- The research targets girls aged 15-24, limiting its relevance to younger demographics.
- There's a lack of quantitative measures to evaluate the impact of adapted models on instructor retention or girls' graduation rates.
- The study predominantly involves out-of-school girls, which may not align with the mixed educational backgrounds in the comparison group.
- Not all models were uniformly assessed across data collection tools, with limited direct comparisons and observations of implementation variations.

Recommendations

- Partners who wish to use the standard model, or alternate between the standard and two-day models, should continue to do so. Continued implementation of the one-day model in its current form is not recommended.
- Streamline NMNW's curriculum for a 4-hour class for girls aged 15-24, focusing on engagement and efficiency.
- Update the training model for NACOSA's Trainers to include the two-day implementation approach for new Instructors.
- Adapt the Boys 10-hour curriculum for a three-day format, considering boys' engagement without physical skills, and provide training for instructors.
- Share study results and implementation recommendations with all partners, highlighting the two-day model's relevance for similar demographics.
- Enhance instructor facilitation across all models through regular evaluations, partner-organized sessions, and refresher trainings by NACOSA or NMNW.
- Create and test a new model offering a 5- or 6-hour one-day program for maximum impact on girls aged 15-24, in collaboration with NACOSA and SRs.
- Regularly assess program outcomes to refine facilitation and management, considering a deeper evaluation of the NMN program's long-term impacts.

Effectiveness of a sexual violence prevention intervention in Reducing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and improving Mental and Psychosocial well-being among adolescents in Uganda (2023)

Research Team: AVSI Foundation, No Means No Worldwide

Publication: N/A

Research question: How does a violence prevention program (No Means No) empower adolescents aged 11-21 and their instructors to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and promote their sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy, in the Kikuube District of Western Uganda?

Sample size: 2,075 adolescents aged 11-21 (1,122 girls and 953 boys)

Timeline: 20 months

Methodology: The mixed-methods evaluation used a randomized control trial at the individual level with a longitudinal cohort design for the quantitative component and 21 focus groups and interviews for the qualitative. The intervention group was made up of male and female adolescents which received the No Means No Intervention. The control group had similar characteristics but did not receive the intervention. Male and female adolescents from both groups completed a survey at baseline and endline. A difference in difference design was employed to evaluate the impact of the intervention. After the endline was complete, the control group also received the intervention.

Data Collection: Quantitative data was collected using surveys adapted from established tools such as No Means No Pre-Post Questionnaires and life skills tools, contextualized for the program. Qualitative data was gathered via key informant interviews with local government stakeholders and instructors, as well as through gender-segmented focus group discussions with adolescents not involved in the surveys.

Results:

- The No Means No program had a statistically significant positive impact on boys' attitudes on gender equality and bystander intervention, girls' likelihood to report sexual violence, adolescents' awareness of support services available in their communities, girls' knowledge about ESD, and girls' self-efficacy.
- 32% of girls and 43% of boys who received the program used skills they learned to defend themselves and others from assault.
- The study observed a perceived spillover effect, with a positive but statistically insignificant change between baseline and endline for several key outcomes, such as changes in gender norms and self-esteem.
- There was a statistically significant increase in victim-blaming perceptions for the control group and an insignificant but concerning increase in negative perceptions about rape myths for all adolescents, indicating that such beliefs remain predominant.

Study Strengths

- Large sample size
- This study is the first to focus on outcomes of the No Means No program in the Ugandan context.

Study Limitations

- Adolescents were sampled at the individual level, so those who received the program may live with or attend school with those who didn't, indicating a spillover effect. 40% of adolescents who didn't receive the program reported they had been taught ESD skills. Though this makes the results of an RCT less reliable, it is also possible evidence that the impact of the No Means No intervention extends beyond those who receive the program directly.
- There were considerable data reliability challenges in the endline results and, after attempting to rectify and conducting a test of data reliability, NMNW and AVSI Foundation decided that the results could not be used to draw conclusions about the impact of the No Means No program.
- 66% of participants were reached at endline (34% lost to follow-up).

Recommendations



- This evaluation offers evidence that some aspects of the program are generalizable to the Ugandan context.
- Evidence that the program may impact the larger community, rather than only adolescents who receive the program.
- For future research, it is recommended to rely on cluster sampling to better detect the impact of the intervention. It is also important to ensure that strong quality control measures are in place so that high-quality data is collected.
- Considering the perceived spillover effects, it is advisable to expand future research to better understand how the diffusion of information impacts the community beyond the directly targeted participants.
- Violence prevention programs should also intensify the delivery of sessions on rape myths and victim blaming, as these perceptions were still predominant following the intervention, or supplement with community sensitization interventions that combat deep-rooted negative gender norms.

SKILLZ No Means No: Findings from a Pilot Implementation of a Sexual Violence Prevention Program for Boys in Zimbabwe (2023)

Evaluation Team:

- Bantwana Zimbabwe
- Grassroot Soccer Zimbabwe
- No Means No Worldwide (NMNW)

Objectives

The aim of this evaluation was to assess the feasibility, effectiveness and relevance of the SKILLZ No Means No curriculum, a curriculum with a soccer-based delivery format to make learning more fun and engaging for boys and additional content on HIV/STI prevention and substance abuse which are highly relevant topics to boys in Zimbabwe.

The four main objectives include:

1. Assess the feasibility of SKILLZ No Means No curriculum for instructors and youth
2. Assess the effectiveness of SKILLZ No Means No curriculum and boys' self-efficacy around communication and seeking support
3. Assess the relevance of SKILLZ No Means No curriculum to youth
4. Compare SKILLZ No Means No to NMNW's standard No Means No Boys & Young Men (COVID-Safe) curriculum in Zimbabwe

Methodology

A mixed-methods design was used including quantitative routine monitoring data and qualitative data on youth and instructor experiences during the program. To determine the results of each objective, participant attendance registers, pre-post questionnaires, a quarterly reporting form, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews with implementing partner staff members were designed to collect key data. The quantitative data included information on participant attendance, graduation, disclosures and referrals, as well as pre-post questions around knowledge and attitudes on bystander intervention skills, attitudes on gender norms, and how to avoid violence as a power paradigm, HIV/STI prevention and substance abuse. FGDs included questions around boys' experiences in the program, what skills they learned, and how they have utilized them. FGDs with instructors included questions on their experiences teaching the curriculum and their perspectives on the relevance to boys and the context. Quantitative data was analyzed by observing pre, post and percent change outcomes from the pre-post questionnaires and qualitative data was transcribed, coded, and collaboratively analyzed to identify key themes. *(Note: Pre-post questionnaire results were not as strong in the designated evaluation period due to challenges around boys' literacy and reluctance to take the questionnaire in the districts of implementation. After discussing and generating solutions to improve the results, the evaluation team collected pre-post questionnaire data in the following quarter, and these were included in the evaluation report as an addendum).*

Sample Size

A total of 909 boys participated in the SKILLZ No Means No program from January to March 2023. Three FGDs were conducted with youth participating in the SKILLZ No Means No program, two with boys aged 9-14 and one with boys aged 14-17, and one FGD was conducted with Instructors facilitating the SKILLZ No Means No curriculum. A total of 45 youth and instructors participated in FGDs, with each group including 10-12 participants. In the following quarter, 1,623 pre and post questionnaires were collected for the SKILLZ No Means No program, and 567 pre and post questionnaires were collected for NMNW's standard No Means No Boys & Young Men (COVID-Safe) curriculum.

Timeline: The evaluation timeline for data collection was initially set for a period of 3 months from January to March 2023; however, due to the challenges around pre-post questionnaire data collection, the evaluation period was extended to include pre-post data from the period April to June 2023.

Results

Feasibility of SKILLZ No Means No

- Instructors found it feasible to implement SKILLZ No Means No in their community
- Instructors faced minor challenges around keeping boys' attention immediately after a soccer-related activity, though this can be addressed by adjusting the order of activities
- Logistical challenges faced, not related to SKILLZ No Means No specifically, include negotiating time with schools, heavy rains, traveling long distances to schools, and prioritizing SKILLZ No Means No in districts with concurrent programming
- Portions of the curriculum could be further adapted to fit the rural context

Effectiveness and Relevance of SKILLZ No Means No

- Bantwana Zimbabwe saw a 100% participant retention rate through the course of the intervention, which could be due to youth engagement in the curriculum or implementation with youth in schools
- Boys learnt and applied skills around bystander intervention, avoiding violence in their daily lives, reporting instances of assault they witness, and how to challenge gender norms in their community, though some requested additional support around gender-based violence and how to intervene in an assault
- Topics around HIV/STIs and substance abuse proved to be highly relevant to the lives of boys participating and to preventing sexual violence in the community
- The soccer-based format was fun and engaging for boys and improved learning of topics (ex. understanding the risk of HIV to not just an individual, but to the community)

Added value of SKILLZ No Means No

- SKILLZ No Means No had a higher participant retention rate through the course of the curriculum compared to NMNW's standard No Means No Boys & Young Men (COVID-Safe) curriculum, 100% and 82% respectively, possibly due to youth engagement in the SKILLZ No Means No curriculum or implementation with youth in schools
- Additional content in SKILLZ No Means No on HIV/STIs and substance abuse are relevant to prevent sexual violence in Zimbabwe
- The soccer-based delivery makes the curriculum more engaging for boys, as soccer is popular in Zimbabwe and an effective tool to engage boys in learning important concepts

Key Findings (Addendum)

- When compared to the standard No Means No Boys & Young men curriculum, boys participating in SKILLZ No Means No had a percent change of almost two times that of the standard for knowledge and three times for attitudes over the course of the program, indicating higher levels of learning in SKILLZ No Means No likely attributed to the fun and engaging soccer-based delivery method.
- Boys scored > 80% on questions on new content in SKILLZ No Means No around HIV/STI prevention and substance abuse, topics that are highly relevant to boys in Zimbabwe.
- Boys in both programs could benefit from additional support on topics around challenging gender norms and expectations, skills to support them in their journey to adulthood, myths that contribute to gender-based violence, and skills to handle the pressures of life.

Recommendations

- Continue to implement the SKILLZ No Means No curriculum and to monitor the results
- Investigate the factors and challenges around the small pre-post sample and brainstorm solutions to capture short-term outcomes of the program
- Strengthen modules on sexual and gender-based violence and skills to intervene in an assault as some participants requested additional support in these areas
- Further adapt and contextualize the curriculum to accommodate skills relevant to a rural setting and translate the curriculum into the local language
- Restructure the curriculum so that serious or heavy topics are not immediately following engaging soccer-based activities
- Provide instructors with additional support and sensitization on creating a safe space for boys to disclose experiences of sexual violence
- Integrate age-specific adaptations for younger participants when discussing heavy topics such as rape and violence
- Expand the target reach to boys aged 18-24, as they are in need of the curriculum and often engage with younger girls in the community
- Brainstorm ways to broaden the impact of the program by engaging with community leaders, family and key stakeholders to increase buy in
- Identify factors that contributed to Bantwana Zimbabwe's 100% graduation rate so that learnings can be applied to other NMNW programs
- Consider adding more engaging, sports-based content into the standard No Means No Boys & Young Men curriculum
- Consider rolling out the SKILLZ No Means No program in Zimbabwe due to the added value, relevance and higher youth engagement

“No Es No”: Pilot Implementation of a Sexual Violence Prevention Program in Monterrey, Mexico (2022)

Evaluation Team:

- Instituto Municipal de las Mujeres Regias (IMMR)
- CreeSer
- Supera
- No Means No Worldwide (NMNW)

Evaluation Aim: To understand program outcomes, successes and challenges the No Means No curriculum for girls and boys adapted and contextualized to the Latin American context.

Methodology: A mixed-methods design was used including quantitative routine monitoring data and qualitative data on instructor experiences during the program. To determine the results of each objective, participant attendance registers, pre-post questionnaires, a quarterly reporting form, focus group discussions (FGDs) for instructors were designed to collect key data associated with the objectives. The quantitative data included information on participant attendance, graduation, disclosures and referrals, as well as questions around knowledge and attitudes on mental, verbal and physical skills to prevent sexual assault, bystander intervention skills, attitudes on gender norms, and how to avoid violence as a power paradigm.

Sample Size: A total of 1,278 boys and girls participated in the curriculum during the evaluation period. Overall, 16 instructors, 10 female and 6 male, participated in the FGDs.

Timeline: Data for the evaluation was collected from May to September 2022 and FGDs with instructors were completed by October 2022.

Results

Instructor Retention & Capacity

- NMNW was able to certify 98% of instructor candidates as No Means No instructors
- The majority of certified Instructors have been retained through the first 6 months (86% in girls’ program and 100% in boys’ program)
- Challenges during instructor training included communication barriers due to limited language capacity in both English and Spanish, and facilitation of joint sessions in an equitable way, both of which may have contributed to learning gaps in certain topics
- Main challenges faced included safety, time management, and classroom management
- Instructors faced institutional barriers and resistance in scheduling implementation and support for the program, as it challenges cultural norms

Program Reach

- As of September 2022, 609 youth graduated from the program, or 36% of the 1,700 youth targeted for the year. The result is lower than expected due to challenges graduating all youth, late program launch, and challenges scheduling programming in schools.
- Program graduation rates were lower than expected for both girls and boys (57% and 39%, respectively), largely due to the shortened length of some interventions to ten 40-minute classes due to the water crisis, which did not allow some participants to reach the 8-hour exposure to content required for graduation.

Short-Term Outcomes

- Girls indicated that they understood most of the content by the end of the intervention as more than 86% gave the desired response on most pre-post questions, and results were comparable or higher than global averages.
- Girls are better able to identify the risks of abuse and gain confidence through the course of the curriculum
- Gaps identified in girls’ results were on knowledge of the safety goal, date and acquaintance rape, and awareness
- Boys’ results indicated they understood some of the key concepts by the end of the program, with more than 77% giving the desired response on five of the questions post-intervention, but other topics showed a lower understanding. This result is comparable to the 2021 boys’ programs average from other countries.
- Positive changes in boys included their awareness around joking about sensitive topics, such as homophobia and femicide



- Gaps identified in boys' results were the sources of strength, your moment of truth, empowered survivors perspective, identifying threats and dangerous situations, the aggressive-assertive-passive scale, and bystander intervention. The percent change from pre to post was lower than similar programs in other countries.
- It was difficult to engage older youth, especially boys, and apathy was a challenge

Supporting Survivors

- 34% of youth disclosing experiences of violence¹ to their Instructors had referrals initiated for support services
- Many youth, particularly girls, refused services and were provided with an emergency number instead

Recommendations

- Contextualize the curriculum to be more responsive to the Mexican context and age-appropriate through adaptation of role plays, scenarios, examples, statistics, and activities, with a focus on the modules with lower pre-post scores (Tables 12 and 13)
- Design and pilot implementation of 40-minute classes in 2023
- Improve instructor facilitation by sharing best practices, limiting class sizes when possible, and reaching out to implementing partner staff and NMNW with any specific support needed
- Conduct Instructor Development Visits (IDVs) on identified modules with lower pre-post scores to ensure they are implemented with fidelity to the curriculum
- Continue to build relationships with key institutions to increase buy-in for the No Means No program in Monterrey, ensure time and space can be secured for safe implementation, and strengthen referral network
- For the next project phase, identify actions to improve cross-language communication (i.e., hiring a translator, translating more materials) and select the strongest English speakers as Trainer Candidates
- Set clear ground rules for creating a safe space before joint training sessions
- Identify best practices that have led to high instructor retention
- Ongoing monitoring of graduation rates and pre-post results for improvement

¹ Non-sexual violence experiences were counted in addition to sexual violence.

Young People's Experiences With an Empowerment-Based Behavior Change Intervention to Prevent Sexual Violence in Nairobi Informal Settlements: A Qualitative Study (2021)

Research Team:

- Department of Global Public Health, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Institute for Social Development, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa.
- Ujamaa-Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.

Publication: Global Health: Science and Practice

Research aim: To understand girls' and boys' experiences of the Empowerment Self Defense (ESD) intervention—IMPower (girls) and Your Moment of Truth (boys)—to identify program strengths, areas for improvement, and potential mechanisms of change.

Hypothesis: The ESD intervention helps to reduce power *over* by strengthening girls' and boys' power to protect themselves and others; their power *within* (e.g., self-confidence, self-efficacy); and their power *with*, a collaborative form of power achieved through building bridges between individuals to achieve a common goal.

Sample size: 10 FGDs (5 with boys, 5 with girls) were conducted with a total of 46 boys and 43 girls. 21 individual IDIs were conducted with a total of 10 girls and 11 boys.

Timeline: The study timeline for data collection was 6 months, with a recruitment process that took place before this period. Participants underwent the intervention at least one year prior to data collection.

Methodology: Qualitative study. Utilized purposive sampling to select participants aged 15-21 years from five schools located in four Nairobi slums² who had participated in one of two parallel school-based ESD curriculums at least 1 year ago. Selected participants indicated interest and availability to participate in FGDs or IDIs. When more students than needed volunteered, random selection was used. Findings were analyzed using thematic network analysis guided by empowerment theory.

Data Collection: Data were collected through FGDs (5 for boys, 5 for girls) and individual IDI's that explored participants' experiences of the intervention and their suggestions for improvement. FGDs and IDIs were conducted in person by trained data collectors in English, Kiswahili, or Sheng (local slang). FGDs and IDIs were matched by gender (data collector and participants) and took place in a private space. They were recorded, transcribed in Kiswahili/Sheng, and translated into English.

Results:

- A relatively short, behavioral school-based intervention can empower both girls and boys to prevent various forms of sexual violence in a low-income setting.
- The intervention can contribute to empowering adolescent girls to recognize and resist sexual violence, negotiate consent, and exercise agency.
- The intervention can also promote positive, nonviolent masculinities among adolescent boys and encourage rejection of harmful stereotypes. Boys reported an increased ability to avoid risky behaviors and "bad" peer groups and to understand and respect consent.
- Girls described how the intervention strengthened their self-confidence, and boys said that it boosted positive life values and gender-equal attitudes.
- Skilled, thoroughly trained local facilitators and interactive, adolescent-friendly relevant content were highlighted by participants as key to intervention success.
- Areas of program improvement include expanding the curriculum to contain more content on sexual and reproductive health and rights; building the capacity of facilitators to understand and deliver comprehensive sexuality education (CSE); and incorporating multilevel support structures to target the root causes of SGBV, such as involving communities and families.

Study strengths

² Kibera, Dandora, Mkuru-Viwandani, and Huruma

- This is the first qualitative exploration of the potential change processes underlying the intervention and of the challenges that adolescents face when they confront norms of violence and gender.
- The credibility of findings is strengthened by the use of a theoretical framework, double coding of transcripts, and the verification of emerging themes with the interviewers.
- Includes both girls' and boys' curriculum.
- Interviewers were familiar with the intervention as well as local communities and slang to gain participants' trust.

Study Limitations:

- The study asked participants to remember the intervention from 1 year prior and recollection may be limited
- The retrospective nature limits the ability to draw conclusions about the impact of the intervention and findings should not be considered representative of all girls and boys exposed to the program
- The potential for social desirability bias exists as the interviewers were from the same organization that implemented the program.
- More research is needed to better understand the longitudinal effects of the intervention and the strategies for sustainable implementation in different contexts.

Recommendations

- Policymakers should consider integrating empowerment-based, behavioral interventions in standard school curriculums to prevent sexual violence and harmful gender norms.
- Similar interventions should target adolescents' broader social environments by involving and training out-of-school youth, parents, teachers, and communities with the aim to address the root causes of SGBV.
- The curriculum should contain more content on sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- It is important to build the capacity of facilitators to understand and deliver CSE to participants.

“I learned that I am worth defending”: A process evaluation of a sexual assault prevention program implemented on an Indian reservation (2021)

Research Team: University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Publication: Journal of Community Psychology, 2021

Research hypothesis: The study was designed to examine the acceptability of an empowerment sexual abuse (SA) self-defense program (IMpower) with Native American girls living on an Indian reservation in the Mid-western region of the United States.

- Aim 1: Participants’ acceptability of the program
- Aim 2: Community stakeholder acceptability of the program

Sample size: 102 Native American girls in middle school and high school participated in the 6-month follow-up survey. 18 community stakeholders participated in interviews, including five girls who participated in the program and 13 community members (e.g., local program facilitators, school personnel, community leaders).

Timeline: 6 months following IMpower intervention

Methodology: Qualitative study. The study focuses on retrospective acceptability data from four open-ended, short answer questions in a post-intervention survey collected from program participants. These responses were coded by two analysts independently and results compared for agreement on categories. Interviews with community stakeholders were conducted 6 months post-intervention and covered 15 acceptability questions with follow-up probes specific to that stakeholder. These responses were also coded by two analysts independently using NVIVO.

Data collection: Survey questions on acceptability were part of a post-intervention survey administered to participants on paper. Interviews were conducted face-to-face with stakeholders and audio recorded, lasting 15-60 minutes each.

Results:

- Overall, the program was positively accepted by both participants and community stakeholders
- Many respondents commented that they liked everything about the program, such as learning new skills, developing closer relationships with their peers, attachment to program facilitators, and feeling empowered. These results indicate that IMpower may be effective at boosting confidence and assertiveness and that what girls liked about the program align with research on what makes programming effective, particularly skill-building and positive relationships.
- Girls said they felt more confident and assertive, knew what to do in dangerous situations, and felt stronger because of the program. These results align with the program goal of enhancing empowerment and self-worth.
- Although most respondents said they liked everything about the program, dislikes included: the lecture-style nature of the curriculum, length of classes/program, missing normally scheduled school classes, and pressure by facilitators to participate.
- Community stakeholders identified the primary area for improvement to be enhancing the program with culturally grounded components (deep cultural adaptation), which could make the program more effective. Other suggestions included smaller group size, moving the setting out of the gym (which was dirty and not an effective space for the lecture components), and have concurrent programming for the boys as teachers did not know what to do with the boys when the classes for girls were happening.

Study Strengths:

- Few studies examine programming implementation among minority groups and present information about program acceptability
- The findings provide some initial evidence that key program components, such as skill-building and increasing girls’ confidence, are working as expected
- Provides insight to how to improve the program

Study Limitations:

- Selection bias may have impacted the study, as those with favorable opinions of the program may have been more likely to participate in the survey and interviews.
- The sample size for the study was small but satisfactory.
- The evaluation was limited in its scope as it did not assess all aspects of acceptability.



Recommendations:

- Cultural adaptation should be the primary for programmatic improvement. Other improvements for consideration include class size, class length, and choosing a space better suited to the activity.
- Future research on the IMpower program should conduct a more in-depth process evaluation that includes not only additional domains of acceptability but program fidelity and safety.

Reactions to Participating in Sexual and Dating Violence Research Among Native American Youth (2021)

Research Team: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Publication: Journal of Interpersonal Violence

Research question: To examine how Native American middle and high school girls and boys felt about participating in sexual and dating violence research, specifically:

- Frequency of being upset
- Factors that correlate with being upset
- Reasons for being upset

Sample size: Participants who were Native American and answered the survey questions about being upset were included in this study (n=149).

Timeline: The data was collected as part of the girls' follow-up study in spring 2018 and the boys' baseline study in fall 2019.

Methodology: This study was drawn from a small number of survey questions that were part of a larger pilot, non-randomized clinical trial to evaluate a rape prevention program. The questions on being upset were analyzed alongside correlate factors, including victimization, perpetration, age, gender, and being a sexual minority.

Data Collection: Surveys were administered at school via computer or paper.

Results:

- Participating in the research was well-tolerated among Native American adolescents as most respondents were not upset by the survey. However, almost a quarter of youth did report being upset.
- Victims were more likely than non-victims to be upset by the survey (34% of victims were upset compared to 19% of non-victims).
- Perpetrators were more likely than non-perpetrators to be upset by the survey (55% of perpetrators were upset compared to 22% of non-perpetrators).
- Sexual minorities were more likely than non-sexual minorities to be upset by the survey (39% of sexual minorities were upset compared to 19% of non-sexual minorities)
- Age and gender did not emerge as being significantly associated with being upset.
- Of respondents who reported the reasons why they were upset, 42% said it was because the survey made them feel awkward or weird, 26% said it was the survey topic, 11% said it reminded them of something, and 13% had other responses that didn't fit into a clear category (examples: feeling bad for girls, pre-existing depression, not knowing how to answer questions).
- There was a higher rate of being upset by this study than other studies with youth. Depression is typically correlated with being upset by studies and research shows that Native American youth have higher rates of depression than White youth which may explain the higher rates of upset.

Study Strengths:

- No research to date has examined the reactions of Native American adolescents to participating in sexual and dating violence research.

Study Limitations:

- The sample size was small, making it difficult to have enough power to detect significant effects, and findings are therefore not generalizable to youth who did not participate in this study.
- Many youth skipped the sexual orientation question which may have affected the analysis.
- Many youth also did not answer the question about being upset which can introduce bias – perhaps youth who skipped the question were more upset than those who answered it.
- About half of the youth who reported being upset answered the open-ended question as to why.
- The extent to which different types of victimization and/or perpetration affected being upset by the survey is not known.
- Only one question was used to determine if participants were upset.



Recommendations:

- Future studies should have a larger sample size, gather additional data on why students declined to answer questions, have more comprehensive measures to determine if someone is upset, and understand how long being upset lasts.
- Researchers should consider adding more information in consent/assent forms that indicate that youth may be upset by the survey. Researchers can also provide more frequent reminders that answering questions are optional and that respondents can stop at any time.

Effectiveness of a Sexual Assault Self-Defense Program for American Indian Girls (2021)

Research Team: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Publication: Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 2021

Research hypothesis: Girls who received IMpower, compared to girls who did not, would report fewer types of sexual assault victimization

- Secondary outcomes: Girls who received IMpower, compared to girls who did not, would report less physical dating violence and sexual harassment victimization
- Intermediate outcomes: Girls who received IMpower would report increases in efficacy to resist a sexual assault and self-defense knowledge.

Sample size: Treatment group – 74 American Indian girls (average age 14) in grades 6-12 residing on an Indian Reservation; Comparison group – 181 American Indian girls (average age 13.7) residing in a city in the same state

Timeline: 6 months apart, baseline and follow-up survey. However, the surveys between the treatment and comparison group did not happen at the same time.

Methodology: Quasi-experimental design. American Indian girls residing on an Indian Reservation in the Great Plains region of the United States were compared to American Indian girls living in a city in the same state. The girls were not randomly assigned to receive the program or not. Results were analyzed using propensity score analysis, an approach that aims to minimize bias and provide more valid causal inferences.

Data collection:

- Surveys were administered at school
- The baseline and follow-up surveys for the treatment group were matched using a self-generated ID.
- The baseline and follow-up surveys for the control group were matched using a broker system.

Results:

- Intermediate outcome: Girls receiving IMpower showed significant increases over time in efficacy to resist a sexual assault and knowledge of effective resistance strategies
- Primary outcome: Girls receiving IMpower compared to those who did not reported lower rates of sexual assault victimization. This suggests that for girls in the IMpower group, compared to those in the comparison group, the incidence of sexual assault decreased by 80%.
- Secondary outcome: For girls in the IMpower group, compared to the comparison group, the incidence of sexual harassment decreased by 26%
- Secondary outcome: There was no significant change in physical dating violence for girls who received IMpower compared to the comparison group.

Study strengths:

- This is the first study to evaluate the effectiveness of IMpower in the United States
- This may also be the first study to evaluate the impact of a sexual assault prevention program on American Indian youth
- This may be the first study to evaluate the impact of empowerment self-defense training on reducing sexual harassment

Study Limitations

- Sample size was small, limiting the generalizability of the results
- Girls were not randomly assigned to treatment/comparison and the two groups were not a perfect match given age and geographic location differences
- There was only one question used to assess physical dating violence, so the measure was limited
- There were limits on the measurements due to time constraints / length of survey constraints, so some other outcomes of interest were excluded
- Questions on efficacy to resist a sexual assault and self-defense knowledge were only administered to the girls who took IMpower, so there is no comparison
- There was less than ideal enrollment and retention in the study



- 33% of girls that received IMpower identified as a sexual minority compared to only 20% in the comparison group, which could impact the results.

Recommendations

- Future research should include a larger sample size and a cluster randomized trial
- Future research should unpack the mechanisms by which IMpower reduced sexual harassment – was it that girls were perceived as more assertive by boys? Did social norms shift to be intolerant of sexual harassment and sexual assault?
- Future research should look deeper into physical dating violence

Efficacy of a Sexual Abuse Prevention Program with Children on an Indian Reservation (2020)

Research Team: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Publication: Journal of Child Sexual Abuse

Research question: What is the acceptability and efficacy of IMpower, a 12-hour Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) prevention program, with American Indian youth?

- Secondary outcomes: children's knowledge of CSA, children's efficacy to resist an attack, if children liked the program, if the program helped keep them safe

This study evaluates a curriculum designed for elementary school children.

Sample size: 48 4th and 5th grade American Indian/Native American children (30 girls and 18 boys, average age of 10) living on Rosebud Indian Reservation in Western Great Plains region, United States

Timeline: 6 months - Baseline survey prior to implementation of IMpower, follow-up 6 months after implementation

Methodology: Non-randomized, single-arm pilot trial methodology – all students enrolled in grades 4 or 5 were invited to participate. The Children's Knowledge of Abuse Questionnaire (CKAQ) was used as the main outcome measure. It is a standardized tool that assesses knowledge of child sexual abuse prevention concepts and skills that could prevent abuse.

Data collection:

- Surveys were administered on school computers

Results:

- The average score on the CKAQ increased significantly from baseline to post-test, indicating a positive change in the children's knowledge of abuse.
- There were significant increases in personal agency relative to adults, specifically that it is ok to say no to a grown up and that if a grown-up tells you to do something you always have to do it. These results suggest that children recognized that they have a voice in what happens to them and that they can say no to adults.
- There were significant increases in personal agency regarding trusting feelings, specifically that they don't have to keep secrets or that it is not your fault if someone touches you in a way you do not like. These results suggest that children learned that they can trust themselves to make decisions about their own bodies.
- There were increases in knowledge of strangers, but the proportion of accurate responses at follow-up was low. Further investigation may be needed to learn how the children who live on reservations in highly rural areas understand the concept of strangers.
- There was a significant increase in the proportion of children who felt that they knew how to break free if someone bigger than them were to grab them from 75.6% at baseline to 95.1% at follow-up
- 83% of participants reported they liked the IMpower class
- 95.8% of participants felt that the IMpower classes would help them stay safe
- Children's knowledge of abuse relative to inappropriate touching increased with a moderate effect size

Study strengths:

- There is no previous evidence found of research on evidence-based CSA prevention programs with Native American children
- The findings indicate that IMpower was effective at improving knowledge of CSA

Study Limitations

- The study focuses on the acceptability of the program and knowledge change but does not include the impact of IMpower on rates of CSA.
- The sample size is small – only 27% of eligible students are included in the final results. The others were excluded primarily due to non-consent (46% did not get parental consent to take the survey) or absenteeism on the day of the baseline (21% absent). It is possible that children who were excluded due to absenteeism or non-consent from parents are more at risk for CSA.
- Because of the low response rate, the generalizability of the study is limited.



- The study was not randomized, so we cannot infer causality (we cannot claim that IMpower *caused* the results)
- The instrument was not validated with Native American children prior to the study.

Recommendations

- Future research should include a pilot to see if measures are accurate for the population
- Further research is needed to determine the extent to which existing CSA prevention programs need to be culturally adapted for American Indian youth.

What Works To Prevent Violence Against Women And Girls? (2020)

Research Team: Stanford University and SAMRC (South African Medical Research Council), funded by DFID

Publication: January 2020

Research question: A rigorous global evidence review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which evaluated 16 violence against women and girls prevention interventions in 14 sub-Saharan African, Asian and Middle Eastern contexts, over six years (2014–2019). What Works funded 11 RCTs of promising interventions, one of which was IMpower.

Sample size: The RCT included both girls and boys living in informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya. The girls were age 10-14, and we do not have further information on the boys' arm of the trial. The evidence review also included the research paper from Malawi.

Timeline: Endline was 24 months after the intervention.

Methodology: Low-income housing areas were randomly allocated as intervention or control. Boys received Sources of Strength and girls received Girls Empowerment Self-Defense.

Data collection:

- Completed by independent research team

Results:

- Self-defense to prevent sexual violence were categorized as a group as “promising, but requires further research”
- The only intervention included in the paper that is outside of North America is IMpower
- IMpower in Malawi showed positive impact on VAWG
- IMpower in Kenya had uncertain results. The study showed no impact on rape but results were interpreted with caution due to methodological issues
- An independent review of the data set confirmed no evidence of a reduction in rape over 12 months.

Study strengths:

- In defense of the What Works methodology, this article was published in November 2023: [Sexual Assault Among Young Adolescents in Informal Settlements in Nairobi, Kenya: Findings from the IMPower and SOS Cluster-Randomized Controlled Trial](#)

Study Limitations

- The What Works paper itself does not cover the limitations, but it does say that the results should be interpreted with caution. From internal documentation, the main issues presented were deviations from protocol; insufficient training of enumerators; turnover; breaches of confidentiality
- An independent review found “that there were inconsistencies girls’ responses to the question “have you ever had sexual intercourse” with many girls who answered “yes” at baseline answering “no” at endline. This raises questions about the reliability of girls’ responses to sensitive questions including those relating to the primary outcome, rape in the previous 12 months. Unreliable responses in both trial arms would tend to mask any intervention effect that existed.”
- The idea that IMpower leads to overconfidence in girls and increases risk is not valid and conclusion was from one interview, as determined by the independent review.
- We don’t have much documentation on the implementation and fidelity compared to what NMNW implements currently, so we had some doubts as to if the program was the same as ours. This was confirmed when some of our staff (including Mike, Paul, and Fab) visited Ujamaa in late 2019.

Recommendations

- More research is needed

Sexual Violence among Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Malawi: a cluster-randomized controlled implementation trial of empowerment self-defense training (2018)

Research Team: Johns Hopkins

Publication: BMC Public Health

Research question: How does empowerment self-defense reduce the risk for sexual assault among school-age women in Malawi?

- Secondary outcomes: confidence, self-defense knowledge, violence disclosures

Sample size: 141 schools and 6644 school-age girls (both primary and secondary schools) in Lilongwe, Dedza, and Salima districts.

Timeline: 10.5 months from intervention to follow-up

Methodology: The study was a cluster-randomized trial, with the unit of measurement the school.

Within each school, a simple random sample of students were selected to receive the intervention. The control group received the standard of care, a 2-hour lifeskills program

Data collection:

- Self-administered baseline and follow-up surveys, with questions read aloud in English and Chichewa
- The Ballet box method was used to administer the survey.

Results:

- Prevalence and incidence of sexual assault decreased significantly from 15.2% to 9.2% among intervention students in both primary and secondary schools (39% decrease), while holding steady for the control.
- There was no significant change in self-defense confidence levels.
- Intervention students showed 3x increase in self-defense knowledge, giving evidence that this may be the mechanism that explains the reduction in sexual violence
- Disclosures of violence increased in both intervention and control groups with no significant difference between the two.
- When stratified by type of school, both primary schools and secondary schools indicated a decrease in sexual violence prevalence.
- When stratified by district, Lilongwe and Salima districts showed a decrease in sexual violence prevalence but not Dedza (could be a result of statistical power for the sample size)
- The proportion of assaults by relatives decreased by 53% for the intervention group, but there was not a significant decrease for other types of perpetrators.
- 43% of girls reported using IMPower skills to stop forced sex. Skills were also used to stop harassment and physical violence.
- 50% if disclosures occur to friends, with no change from baseline to follow up.

Study strengths:

- Provides evidence that the program can be replicated with impact in a context other than Nairobi's informal settlements
- Adds to a limited evidence base on what works to prevent sexual assault

Study Limitations

- 2000+ students lost to follow up
- There were measurement limitations in assessing self-confidence – only 2 questions asked on the survey.
- Unable to link individual data cross time
- Lack of demographic data on participants, so it is hard to determine if there were other differences between treatment and control group.
- Measurement on forced sex but does not include other assault experiences; therefore the extent of sexual violence might be underestimated
- Unclear if findings will last over time
- Data is self-reported, so there is possible error or bias



Recommendations

- Future research on how the intervention functions differently for different types of perpetrators will be useful
- What is the effect of the intervention on sexual harassment or physical/emotional abuse?

A Behavior-Based Intervention That Prevents Sexual Assault: the Results of a Matched-Pairs, Cluster-Randomized Study in Nairobi, Kenya (2016)

Research Team: Stanford University

Publication: Prevention Science

Research question: Does a 6-week classroom-based girls' empowerment program in parallel with a boys' educational program significantly reduce the incidence of sexual assault?

- Secondary outcomes:
 - Self-efficacy, as measured through the Generalized Self-efficacy Scale
 - The distribution of the number of times victims were assaulted
 - Skills taught in class used outside of class
 - Disclosure rates and to whom students disclosed
 - Distribution of perpetrators

Sample size: 5,686 primary school girls age 10-16 in 28 schools divided into intervention and control groups. Though the girls' and boys' programs occurred in parallel, outcomes were only measured for girls.

Timeline: 12 months

Methodology: The treatment was cluster-randomized at the school level. Treatment was the boys' and girls' curriculum; control was the Standard of Care (SOC) life skills class. Intervention and control schools were placed into matched pairs based on similar characteristics. All students at the school were measured in baseline and follow up, and a difference-in-differences comparison was used. It was an open cohort model, meaning that the cohort of students was followed rather than individual students.

Data collection: The Ballet Box Method was used to administer a questionnaire.

Results:

For girls who were in the intervention schools:

- The reported incidence of sexual assault decreased by 3.7% in the intervention group, down from 7.3% at baseline
- 62% of girls in the intervention group disclosed violence at baseline, increasing to 65% at follow-up. The control group's disclosure rate decreased significantly from 63% at baseline to 52% at follow-up.
- There was no meaningful change in who the girls disclosed to in either group. The majority of girls from both groups told a friend or neighbor.
- Significant increase in self-efficacy, as measured on a 4-point scale.
- There were fewer one-time incidents reported compared to the control, indicating that the intervention had an impact on reducing one-time incidents but lower impact on repeated high-risk situations
- 35% of girls reported using the skills learned to stop a sexual assault

Study strengths:

- Large sample size, which addresses limitations of prior studies
- Cluster-randomized control trial
- Includes both girls' and boys' curriculum
- Intervention starts at earlier age and was still effective

Study Limitations

- Girls had different length of exposure time to sexual assault (1 year prior to intervention at baseline and 9 months post-intervention for follow up). Sensitivity analysis indicates that this was unlikely to change results.
- The survey was short in length, limiting the number of survey items.
- Large group surveying is suboptimal and the instructors gave the survey themselves, introducing potential bias
- The study did not follow individuals over time – cohort only
- All measures are self-reported
- Cross-contamination between schools is possible

Recommendations



- There was still 10% incidence of sexual assault at baseline, which indicates that the program could start earlier
- We should continue to scale and study the intervention
- The findings may be able to be generalized to similar settings

Evidence that Classroom-Based Behavioral Interventions Reduce Pregnancy-Related School Dropout Among Nairobi Adolescents (2016)

Research Team: Stanford University

Publication: Health Education & Behavior

Research question: What is the effect of behavioral, empowerment-focused interventions on the incidence of pregnancy-related school dropout among girls in Nairobi's informal settlements?

Sample size: More than 3600 girls from 68 schools in 4 communities, divided into 2 cohorts from 2011 and 2013. The first cohort consisted of 1,964 girls from 36 schools participating in the No Means No program from 2011-2012. The second cohort consisted of 1,690 girls from 32 schools in 2012-2013.

Timeline: 1 year before intervention to 1 year after intervention

Methodology: Collected and analyzed retroactive data on pregnancy-related dropouts from two cohorts to determine a change in the number of pregnancy-related dropouts from 1 year before to 1 year after intervention. The intervention schools were matched to similar schools and the rates of dropout due to pregnancy were compared and a difference-in-differences comparison was used.

Data collection: Relied on official school records, interviews with staff, and roll call method (asking classmates why their colleagues dropped out).

Results:

- Annual incidence of school dropout due to pregnancy decreased from 3.9% at baseline to 2.1% at follow up, a 46% decrease. There was no significant change in comparison schools (2.7% at baseline to 2.8% at follow-up)
- The report attributes these changes to the intervention.

Study strengths

- There was a large amount of data across geographic areas and years to use for this analysis.
- The results hold up after several tests of assumptions, such as sensitivity testing.

Study Limitations

- The quality of records varied. Only 27 of 68 schools had formal records of dropouts, and other data relied on memory which could be unreliable.
- Pregnancies may go unreported, so some data might be missed.
- It is an observational study rather than experimental, though evidence suggests robust results.
- Baseline characteristics were not identical despite matching

Recommendations

- There are different possible mechanisms that could have contributed to pregnancy dropout: increasing young women's control over their bodies, decreasing child marriage, increasing girls' sense of community by using local instructors, or the reduction in sexual assault as a result of the program. Further study on these different mechanisms is recommended.

A 6-Week School Curriculum Improved Boys' Attitudes and Behaviors Related to Gender-Based Violence in Kenya (2015)

Research Team: Stanford University

Publication: Journal of Interpersonal Violence

Research question: What is the effect of a gender-based violence educational curriculum on male attitudes and action towards women?

Sample size: 1,543 boys age 15-22. 1,250 boys received the intervention (Your Moment of Truth) and 293 boys were offered the control (Standard of Care).

Timeline: 9 months

Methodology: 36 schools were identified in two geographically distinct areas to prevent cross-contamination. 29 high schools were given the curriculum while 7 were given Standard of Care. The schools were similar in demographic characteristics such as poverty levels and the incidence of rape in the school communities.

Data Collection: Boys completed a written questionnaire before the class (baseline), immediately after the class, 4.5 months post-intervention, and 9 months post-intervention. Questions involved attitudes towards women and rape myths, witnessing violence, and intervention when violence was witnessed. The Ballot Box Method was used to administer the survey.

Results:

- The YMOT program was highly effective in improving attitudes towards women. Attitudes were measured using a “Positive Women Composite”, which increased significantly by 41% in the intervention group, while decreasing significantly in the control (offering evidence that adolescents may be more likely to endorse rape myths over time).
- When witnessing gender-based violence, 76% of boys receiving the intervention reported successfully intervening, compared to 38% of boys in the control group.
- The positive attitudes towards women from YMOT participants were maintained over time.
- Almost twice as many boys in the intervention group (48% vs. 25%) recognized behaviors that were physically threatening
- Positive attitudes toward women predicted successful bystander intervention

Study strengths

- Large sample of boys in an area with a high incidence of gender-based violence.
- The intervention was adapted to the local context by conducting initial research prior to launching the program.
- The Ballot Box Method collects more accurate results for sensitive data because it assures confidentiality and anonymity.

Study Limitations

- The intervention group was older than the control. Age seemed to impact perceptions towards women, with younger boys having more positive attitudes.
- The researchers were unable to follow the same students over time and there was some dropout.
- Sample distribution was not equal between treatment and control.

Recommendations

- Conduct further research on the factors that contributed to the boys' decision to intervene and the success of their interventions
- Conduct further research on the connection between recognition of abusive behavior and likelihood of intervention
- There is evidence that it is worthwhile targeting boys at a younger age given the connection between age and negative perceptions towards women.

Prevention of violence against women and girls: what does the evidence say? (2015)

Publication: The Lancet

Research question: What interventions reduce the prevalence and incidence of violence against women and girls?

Methodology: Literature review of what works for prevention of violence against women. The researchers reviewed 100 literature reviews and evaluations.

Results:

- Across different forms of violence, effective programs are commonly participatory, engage multiple stakeholders, support critical discussion about gender relationships and the acceptability of violence, and support greater communication and shared decision making among family members, as well as non-violent behavior.
- Most of the evidence on effective interventions was from high-income countries, and most studies focused on intimate partner violence. The research from developing country contexts focused on child marriage and FGM. Most of the studies focused on response rather than prevention.
- No Means No is highlighted as a group-based training intervention to empower women and girls, and the paper cites the Kenya study (2014).
- There is overall limited rigorous data on what works.

Study strengths

- Being identified as an intervention that shows impact in VAW prevention by The Lancet adds credibility to NMNW.
- NMNW is a leader in a space with limited evidence on what works.

Study Limitations

- This is not a study, but recognition of the Kenya study by a well-respected source, therefore increasing the reputation on NMNW.

Recommendations

- Increase investment in violence research and program evaluation, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries.

Rape Prevention Through Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (2014)

Research Team: Stanford University

Publication: Journal of American Academy of Pediatrics

Research question: Is empowerment and self-defense training effective at preventing sexual assault³ for adolescent girls in the African context, specifically Nairobi's large informal settlements?

Sample size: 1,978 girls age 13-20 from 4 neighborhoods (31 schools) near Nairobi received the intervention; 428 girls received life skills class (control)

Timeline: 10.5 months

Methodology: Settlements were selected because of high crime rates and nonparticipation in the pilot study. The control group was 4 schools that were socio-demographically similar but geographically distinct from the treatment. Assignment to intervention/control was purposive.

Data Collection: Girls completed a written questionnaire before the class (baseline), after class 3, after class 6, and 10.5 months alter (endline). The Ballet Box Method was used to administer the survey.

Results:

At baseline, there was no apparent difference between intervention and control groups. At endline the girls who received No Means No:

- Had a significant decrease in sexual assault rates from 17.9% at baseline to 11.1% at endline, a 38% decrease. There was no change for those receiving the control.
- Increased sexual assault disclosure from 56% to 75%, a 34% increase. There was no change for the control group. Most disclosures were to family and friends; few participants disclosed to medical or crime professionals.
- 52% reported using the skills learned to stop an assault

The results were consistent for 3 of 4 intervention areas, regardless of the baseline levels of assault. The cost was \$1.75 USD per assault averted, compared to \$86 per assault for initial medical visit.

Study strengths

- There was a large sample size of nearly 2000 girls
- The results build on the 2013 study and show impact across a wider geographic area, providing validity.

Study Limitations

- 21-27% of girls were lost to follow up, though analysis shows that this was very unlikely to affect the results.
- The study was not randomized at the individual level and neighborhoods were purposively selected.
- All data was self-reported so it may not be accurate. However, the Ballet Box Method used has been shown to be more valid than other methods for collected data on gender-based violence.
- Limited socioeconomic data was collected, so it is possible that there were differences between intervention and control groups. However, there are good indications that they were similar.
- The control intervention was only 1.5 hours, compared to 12 hours of No Means No.
- The researchers did not collect data on risk factors for sexual assault other than age, so there was on wat to determine if the result was similar across different risk groups.
- The follow up period was short and it is unclear if the benefits would extend into the future
- Response are anonymous so individual changes cannot be tracked over time

Recommendations

³ Sexual assault or rape was defined as “forced or coerced penetration of the mouth, vagina, or anus using a penis, other body part, or an object,” and sexual harassment was defined as “unwanted comments, whistles, or gestures with a sexual intent” or “unwanted sexual touching.”



- The model was effective in decreasing the rate of assault and the rates of disclosure. The model should be adaptable to other settings both in Africa and globally.
- Future research can extend the timeline.
- It is a cost-effective model.

A Self-Defense Program Reduces the Incidence of Sexual Assault in Kenyan Adolescent Girls (2013)

Research Team: Stanford University

Publication: Journal of Adolescent Health

Research question: What is the effect of a 6-week self-defense program on the incidence of sexual assault⁴ in adolescent high school girls in an urban slum in Nairobi, Kenya?

Sample size: 522 high school girls age 14-21. Girls in Korogocho (8 schools) were offered the intervention, while girls in Kariobangi North (2 schools) were offered the control.

Timeline: 10 months

Methodology: Girls were assigned by the school they attended to self-defense course (intervention) or 1-hour life skills class (control). The life skills class is the current national standard in Kenya. The intervention including the 12-hour No Means No course and 2-hour refresher courses every three months. The schools were selected purposefully to be similar in terms of demographics, student performance, and teacher-to-student ratios.

Data Collection: Girls completed a written questionnaire before the class (baseline) and 10 months later (endline). The Ballot Box Method⁵ was used to administer the survey.

Results:

At baseline, the groups showed no significant difference on age or incidence of rape, indicating that the two groups are comparable. At endline the girls who received No Means No:

- The incidence of sexual assault significantly decreased from 24.6% at baseline to 9.2% at endline (62% decrease), while the control group remained unchanged.
- The intervention group had a 60% decrease in reported assaults by boyfriends and an 83% decrease in reported assaults by relatives, both significant, with no change in the control.
- 56% of girls reported using skills learned in class to avert assault
- Disclosure rates increased significantly in the intervention group from 55.6% to 97.1% (a 75% increase), with no change in the control.
- Intervention cost was \$1.75 USD/student, compared to \$86/person for immediate aftercare services.

Study strengths

- Large sample size in an area with high rates of sexual assault
- Used validated Ballot Box Method to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of questionnaire responses, which likely increased accuracy of result
- The rates of assault reported were higher than official government estimates. Possible explanations include higher incidence in the surveyed area, or higher disclosure rates through the BBM (it was effective in providing assurance to students that their responses would remain anonymous)
- There is no evidence of cross-contamination

Study Limitations

- The study uses a strict definition of sexual assault, but much gender-based violence occurs outside of this definition. These other behaviors were not measured in the study.
- It was not a cluster-randomized trial
- Individual students were not observed over time – averages only
- Some students lost to follow up during the course of study
- Findings may not be applicable to other populations

⁴ “Sexual assault” was defined as physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the mouth, vagina, or anus, using a penis or other body part or any object, as per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention definitions.

Recommendations

- The intervention is effective in reducing sexual assault for the study population.
- The incidence of assault as baseline was high, and so the program could start with younger girls.
- Future research should focus on the effect of the intervention on unwanted pregnancy, STIs (HIV), mental health
- Deliver the curriculum alongside curriculum for male students