LEARNING FROM THE STEPPING STONES AND CREATING FUTURES EVALUATION: EXPLORING THE IMPACT ON IPV AND TRANSACTIONAL SEX

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URBAN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

• 25-50% of urban populations lives in slums (UN, 2016)
• Informal settlements are characterised by high population density, poor infrastructure etc. leads to poor health outcomes (UN, 2016)
• In eThekwini Municipality, SA, estimated 25% households are in informal settlements (HDA, 2015)
• Interventions to address violence and HIV often struggle in these settings (Gibbs et al., 2012)
EXCHANGE SEX AMONG WOMEN IN SSCF

- **Transactional sex: main partner** (56%)
- **Transactional sex: causal partner** (43%)
- **Sex work** (9%)

**Overall (n=680)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18/19</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>48.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>39.7</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary only</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (not complete)</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary (completed)</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>30.5</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Living together/married</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner, but not living together</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No current relationship</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids (yes)</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>76.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- None: 33%
- Main partner only: 19%
- Casual partner (but not sex work): 38%
- Sex work: 10.3%

Any earnings past month (yes): 194 (30.1%)
### HEALTH OUTCOMES BY FORMS OF EXCHANGE SEX AMONG WOMEN IN SSCF (BASELINE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IPV</th>
<th>Non-partner rape</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Problem alcohol use</th>
<th>Modern Contraceptive use</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aOR(95%CI)</td>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>aOR(95%CI)</td>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>aOR(95%CI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No exchange sex</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>ref</td>
<td>ref</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transactional sex</td>
<td>1.15 (1.09-2.54)</td>
<td>0.705</td>
<td>1.38 (0.79-2.38)</td>
<td>0.255</td>
<td>1.09 (0.67-1.78)</td>
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<tr>
<td>with main partner</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transactional sex</td>
<td>1.67 (1.09-2.54)</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>2.67 (1.71-4.16)</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>1.30 (1.95)</td>
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<tr>
<td>with casual partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sex Work</td>
<td>1.25 (0.66-2.39)</td>
<td>0.492</td>
<td>3.49 (1.85-6.58)</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>2.03 (0.86-3.80)</td>
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Two components:
1. Transforming gender norms
2. Livelihood strengthening

21 sessions; each session 3 hours long; primarily single sex; women and men are not in relationships

Delivered by trained peer-facilitators; based on assumptions of participatory methodologies
SSCF TRIAL DESIGN

Cluster randomized controlled trial, wait list

678 women
672 men
34 clusters

2 year follow up
Sept 2015 – Oct 2018

74.9% men & 79.8% women followed up
MEN’S IMPACTS

• Reduction in violence perpetration and alcohol use
  – Significant reduction in past year physical and/or sexual IPV perpetration (aOR0.70, p=0.019)
  – Significant reduction in past year economic IPV perpetration (aOR0.65, p=0.035)
  – Marginal reduction in past year non-partner rape perpetration (aOR0.78, p=0.1)
  – Significant reduction in overall alcohol consumption in past year (β-1.03, p=0.041)

• Stronger livelihoods
  – Significant increase in savings (β 0.64, p=0.009)
  – Improved working in past 3 months and work consistency past year

• No impact on sexual risk behaviour
  – Transactional sex with casual/once-off partner no change (aOR0.92, p=0.692)
  – Casual once/off partners in past year (2+) (aOR0.95, p=0.803)

• No impact on gender norms (β-0.30, p=0.712)
MEN’S IMPACTS – WHY?

• Qualitative research:
  – Supported men to moderate their emotions, including through building relationships with one-another (Washington et al., 2020)
  – Provided a space to recognize their individual circumstances were not an intrinsic feature of themselves, but their location in the economy/society
  – Improved relationships with main partners, less objectification of women
  – However, transactional sex was not tackled directly
  – Primarily these discussions focused on intimate, familial, or community relationships
  – At times facilitators shifted to didactic approaches to intervention delivery
WOMEN’S IMPACTS

• No impact on women’s experiences of violence
  – Past year physical and/or sexual IPV (aOR0.92, p=0.672)
  – Past year non-partner rape (aOR0.99, p=0.968)

• Stronger livelihoods
  – Significant increase in working in past 3 months (aOR1.63, p=0.002)
  – Significant increase in past year work consistency (aOR1.74, p=0.006)
  – Significant increase in past month earnings

• No impact on sexual risk behaviour
  – Transactional sex with casual/once-off partner no change (aOR0.92, p=0.692)
  – Transactional sex with main partner (aOR0.88, p=0.401)
  – Casual once/off partners in past year (2+) (aOR1.12, p=0.565)
  – Sex work (aOR0.99, p=0.978)

• No impact on gender norms (β0.25, p=0.718)
WOMEN’S IMPACTS - WHY?

• Significantly improved economic outcomes, but absolute earnings low (mean R565/$60/month at endline)

• High levels of unresolved trauma/poor mental health (e.g. 45% potential depression), may limit engagement in transforming relationships

• Qualitative data – distributed agency, but no radical reform:
  – Small steps around women’s primary relationships (e.g. confidence, negotiation)
  – Some developed new identities e.g. church going, resisting negative behaviours, but for others this was for a limited period
  – Agency was around small actions, changes
CONCLUSION

• In SSCF, different forms of transactional sex and sex work had different health impacts (transactional sex with casual and sex work v. similar)

• SSCF impacted on men’s perpetration of IPV, alcohol use and livelihoods, v. similar to Stepping Stones trial in Eastern Cape (rural, younger men, Jewkes et al., 2008)

• SSCF improved women’s livelihoods, but had no impact on other outcomes

• Transactional sex, while having similar risk factors to IPV, requires specific interventions/approaches beyond those effective for IPV prevention
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