

# Reducing Intimate Partner Violence: Evidence from a Multifaceted Female Empowerment Program in Urban Liberia\*

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## Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a global public health challenge, but evaluating interventions to reduce IPV is challenging because the underlying factors of IPV are so intertwined that public health professionals recommended it be targeted in multiple directions. This paper evaluates a randomized controlled trial of a multifaceted female empowerment program in Monrovia, Liberia, where the baseline IPV prevalence is particularly high. The program intervention includes intensive psychosocial therapy and vocational skills training throughout a full year. About 12 months after program completion, we find the program significantly reduced the proportion of women who experienced emotional, physical, and sexual IPV by 10-26 percentage points (from control bases of 24-62 percent). While there are multiple pathways through which IPV could be impacted, one channel is that the business training was highly effective: labor supply increased by 37 percent and expenditure by 49 percent. One focus of the program is psychological empowerment, and we find positive but statistically insignificant effects on distress and happiness indices. We also find improvements in social norms around IPV: perceived justifiability of IPV reduced by 0.3 standard deviations.

*JEL Codes:* J12, J16, O12

*Keywords:* intimate partner violence, female empowerment, norms, Liberia

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# 1 Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious public health problem which affects hundreds of millions of women globally. Worldwide, one in three women has experienced some form of physical or sexual IPV in their lifetime (WHO 2021; K. M. Devries et al. 2013). IPV is associated with many negative physical (Smith et al. 2017) and mental (Bacchus et al. 2018) health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, IPV inflicts considerable economic costs on both survivors and society (C. Peterson et al. 2018).

There have been many policy discussions around how to effectively prevent or respond to IPV, and public health professionals recommend that a problem like IPV be targeted in multiple directions at the same time (Ranganathan et al. 2021). This is because IPV is a complex problem caused by a variety of psychological, social, and economic factors. The public health literature on IPV has been centered around the “ecological” framework (Heise 1998), where violence is conceptualized by an interaction of individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors. There is no single cause of violence, thus both IPV prevention and response require an intervention that addresses multiple underlying drivers.<sup>2</sup>

To study the effectiveness of a holistic approach to reducing IPV, we partner with the Liberian Red Cross to conduct a randomized controlled trial of a multifaceted female empowerment program in Monrovia, Liberia. The baseline prevalence of IPV is very high in Liberia. In the most recent Liberia Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2019-2020, 35 percent of partnered women of age 15-49 reported to have experienced physical or sexual IPV in the 12 past months. This is particularly high even compared to other African countries, a geographic region which itself is notorious for high prevalence of IPV (about 26% on average from countries where DHS data is available). There could be many explanations why IPV is highly prevalent in today’s Liberia, including poverty (being one of the poorest

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<sup>1</sup>According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 35% of female IPV survivors experience some form of physical injury related to IPV (Smith et al. 2017). In our study sample, about 25% of physical/sexual IPV survivors report a physical injury as a direct effect of the male partner’s action of IPV.

<sup>2</sup>A “prevention” intervention is both to prevent violence for individuals who experienced violence earlier and to reduce the reoccurrence of violence for those who already have. Note the difference from a “response” intervention, which targets at reducing revictimization of a survivor or recidivism of a perpetrator (Mary Ellsberg et al. 2015).

countries in the world<sup>3</sup>). Yet one possible factor is the civil war that took place in 1989-2003, during which violence against civilian women and girls was weaponized (Omanyondo 2005). Research suggests that one of the hidden costs of such brutal civil war may be a persisting, permissive environment of violence in everyday lives (Steenkamp 2005).<sup>4</sup>

Since 2009, the Liberia National Red Cross Society (LNRCS) has run a female empowerment program targeted at marginalized women in informal settlements of Monrovia, where most of the internally displaced population fled for safety during the civil war. The program goal is to empower women economically and psychosocially so that they can self-sustain their lives and protect themselves from abuse. The program has two major components. The first is aimed at psychosocial empowerment, and includes daily group counseling sessions and cognitive behavior therapy focused on relationships with their spouses and other family member or community members. The second is to improve economic livelihoods through vocational skills and business training centered around helping beneficiaries set up and manage a small business. The program is very intensive: participants attend meetings 4-5 hours every day during the 12-month period. The total number of hours in the program is about 1,200, far more than most other programs.

Access to the program was randomized, and treatment was stratified by baseline characteristics, inclu (a) having experienced physical or sexual IPV past year; and (b) having been affected by the civil war or having family members who have.<sup>5</sup> After conducting a baseline survey and randomizing the sample into treatment and control, the treatment group was invited to the program. While the original study design was to pool three cohorts (each including 400 women), due to COVID disruptions and related funding problems, our implementing partner Red Cross has been able to enroll only one cohort. This paper includes only one cohort of the sample with about 400 women.

The study was designed with IPV as the primary outcome. To measure IPV, we administered the WHO's Violence Against Women module, which is a standardized questionnaire that has been extensively used and vetted by large-scale, multi-country surveys like the DHS.

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<sup>3</sup>CIA World Factbook.

<sup>4</sup>Sub-Saharan African countries with histories of internal conflict have 11%p ( $p < 0.01$ ) higher physical or sexual IPV prevalence than countries with those (base=21%), based on authors' country-level analysis with data from K. M. Devries et al. (2013).

<sup>5</sup>Instances include: relocation, becoming disabled/amputated, family members being killed/dead.

The module consists of 20 questions, each describing a specific IPV incidence (e.g., “Did your man ever slap you or throw something at you that could hurt you in the past 12 months?”).<sup>6</sup> To construct our primary outcomes, responses to each yes/no question are indexed into a binary variable for each of the four categories: controlling behavior, emotional IPV, physical IPV, and sexual IPV.<sup>7</sup> In addition, for each IPV question, conditional on an affirmative response, a followup question is asked about how frequent such episode happened: (a) one or two times; (b) three to five times; or (c) more than five times. For each IPV category, we construct a summary index incorporating responses to these frequency questions.<sup>8</sup>

We have three main findings. First, we find that the intervention has sizable effects on IPV. Twelve months after program completion, it significantly reduces past-year emotional IPV by 23 percentage points (from a control base of 62 percent) and physical IPV by 26 percentage points (from 45 percent in the control). The effects on sexual IPV is 10 percentage points reduction (but insignificant). The effect sizes we find are very large compared to previous findings. For example, the cash transfer literature find effect sizes of 5-11 percentage point reductions in physical IPV (Buller et al. 2018). We also asked a set of questions for norms around IPV (e.g. “Is a husband justified in hitting or beating his wife if she burns the food?”) and find that the program reduced justifiability of physical or sexual IPV by 0.3 standard deviations. This provides suggestive evidence for the change in social norms as one of the explanations for IPV reduction.

Second, we find significant improvements in economic livelihoods. Monthly expenditure increased by about \$12 US from a control base of \$25 (or about 49 percent). While we find no significant increase in our measure of monthly income, our survey module on expenditure is more comprehensive and contains a more exhaustive list of items, so that it could be a better measure of economic welfare. We also find the program increased labor supply on self employment by about 22 hours a month from a control base of 38 hours (or about 57 percent). This is not surprising given that the focus of the business training component of the program is on self-owned business. We find modest evidence for crowding out of labor

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<sup>6</sup>See [Appendix B](#) for full description of the IPV questionnaire.

<sup>7</sup>For example, Controlling Behavior Index equals to one if the respondent said yes to at least one question under the category.

<sup>8</sup>For each IPV categories, responses to frequency questions are standardized into a z-score using inverse covariance weighting per [Anderson \(2008\)](#).

hours from other sources, and the total labor supply hours increases by 19 hours a month (insignificant) from 51 hours in control.

Third, we find positive but statistically insignificant improvements in psychological distress and happiness. To measure distress, we use the Hopkins Symptom Checklist 10-questionnaire (HSCL-10) and construct a 1-4 scale. We find the program reduced the HSCL-10 distress index by 0.02 points (insignificant) on a control base of 2.01. For happiness we construct a summary index from responses to the Happiness and Well-being questions in the World Values Survey, and we find an effect of 0.07 standard deviation (insignificant). Considering one of the major components of the program intervention is psychosocial support, these results are surprising. However, this is consistent with previous studies that find dissipated effects of psychotherapy on psychological wellbeing after one year or later (Blattman et al. 2017; Haushofer et al. 2020).

Recently there have been a lot of impact evaluations where IPV is an outcome. The majority of these are about cash transfers, which have increased in popularity for poverty alleviation programs. The empirical evidence shows that transfers targeted to female lead to reduction in IPV (Angelucci 2008; Hidrobo and Fernald 2013; Bobonis et al. 2013; Hidrobo et al. 2016; Haushofer et al. 2019; Roy et al. 2019),<sup>9</sup> and these tend to show real but modest effects in the order of about 5-11 percentage points for physical IPV (Buller et al. 2018). In a companion project in rural Liberia and Malawi (Aggarwal et al. 2020), preliminary results show unconditional cash transfers reduced proportion of women experiencing physical IPV by 2-5 percentage points (but significant only when samples are pooled).

Some studies evaluate the effect of business training programs coupled with cash transfers (Green et al. 2015; Blattman et al. 2016), but find insignificant effects on IPV.<sup>10</sup> While these studies are similar to ours in that they work with a marginalized population and the intervention includes business training, the intervention in our study is much more intensive. For example, about 400 hours throughout the program are spent on vocational skills and

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<sup>9</sup>Haushofer et al. (2019) find that IPV against women is reduced both when the cash transfers are targeted to the husband and the wife. Also, some studies find that the transfers to women lead to higher IPV for subgroups which face stronger social norms for gender roles (Angelucci 2008) or whose women have the same as or higher education level than the men (Hidrobo and Fernald 2013), but overall there is less evidence that cash transfer programs increase IPV.

<sup>10</sup>Blattman et al. (2016) work with marginalized, war-affected women in Northern Uganda, and Green et al. (2015) extend the experiment by involving male partners, but either find no significant effects on IPV.

business training, whereas in the other two studies program hours add up to about 100 hours.<sup>11</sup> More importantly, our intervention also includes psychosocial therapy.

The study closest to ours is by [Bandiera et al. \(2020\)](#), who find that a multifaceted vocational and life skills training program to adolescent girls in Uganda decreased sex against their will, which is one form of sexual IPV. In addition to the similarities in aiming at economic empowerment, the life skills training component is similar to the psychosocial therapy in our study in that it addresses topics like conflict resolution and violence against women. However, the focus is more on sexual and reproductive health, whereas our intervention involves more intensive group counseling and cognitive behavioral therapy. The therapy sessions in our study also involve the female participants’ partners and children.

The paper proceeds as follows. [Section 2](#) describes the context and experiment and data collection. [Section 3](#) presents the main results. [Section 4](#) discusses possible threats to validity. [Section 5](#) concludes.

## 2 Setting, Study Design, and Data

### 2.1 Context and Setting

This study was conducted in the capital city of Monrovia in Liberia, where IPV is highly prevalent. In the Liberia Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2019-2020, 35% of ever-partnered women of age 15-49 reported to have experienced physical or sexual IPV in the past 12 months, whereas the corresponding averages for Asian, Latin American and other African countries where DHS data is available are respectively 16%, 12%, and 26%. The study population targeted by the Red Cross reports much higher levels of IPV: in our baseline, we find that 51% of women report physical or sexual IPV in the past year.

There are numerous explanations for the high IPV prevalence in today’s Liberia, includ-

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<sup>11</sup>In the WINGS program evaluated by [Blattman et al. \(2016\)](#) and [Green et al. \(2015\)](#), the study sample received 4 days of training, 4-5 follow-up visits, and 3 days of self-group training (i.e., up to 96 hours total). Our intervention is unusually intensive even compared to the numerous business training programs or “graduation” programs that have been extensively tested in development economics. For example, the ILO’s SIYB program ([de Mel et al. 2014](#)) included training for 7 or 9 days for 7 hours a day (i.e., 49 or 63 hours total).

ing poverty.<sup>12</sup> Yet another contributing factor likely are the civil wars that took place in Liberia between 1989-1996 and 1999-2003 and killed around 250,000 people, amounting to approximately 10% of the population of the country then, and displaced more than another million. During the war, violence against civilians, especially women and girls, was systematically mobilized as a “weapon of war” to terrify and subdue communities. A WHO report documents that 2 in 3 Liberian women experienced sexual violence during the civil war (Omanyondo 2005).<sup>13</sup> Research suggests that these attitudes towards violence, once entrenched, may persist (Steenkamp 2005).<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2 Women Training and Integration (WIN) Program

The core intervention of this paper is a multifaceted female empowerment program called the Women Training and Integration (WIN) Program, which has been administered by the Liberian Red Cross since 2009. The program targets vulnerable women in informal settlements of Monrovia,<sup>15</sup> and its main objective is to improve the participants’ livelihoods in multiple dimensions.<sup>16</sup> The WIN program is very intensive and requires a 12-month commitment from participants, who need to be present at the WIN program center for 4-5 hours a day (either in a morning or afternoon session) for 5 days a week during the 12-month period.

The program has two major components. The first is psychosocial therapy, which includes one-to-one and group counseling sessions, thematic group discussions, cognitive behavioral

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<sup>12</sup>Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world (CIA World Factbook) with weak institutions, and many lack access to formal education and sustainable economic activities. For example, per one of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals, the net primary education enrollment in Liberia was 37% in 2016, while the average of Sub-Saharan African countries was 78% (UNESCO Institute for Statistics).

<sup>13</sup>Also see Domingo et al. (2013), Jones et al. (2014), and Women (2013).

<sup>14</sup>Steenkamp (2005) suggests that a prolonged exposure to violence can give rise to a “culture of violence,” which can be defined as “the system of norms, values, or attitudes which allow, make possible or even stimulate the use of violence to resolve any conflict or relation with another person” (Moser and Winton 2002).

<sup>15</sup>Table A2 lists the selection criteria for the WIN program. To qualify, an applicant must belong to a minimum of three groups. LNRCS has a thorough process of selecting beneficiaries. They review the application packets carefully, pay visits to the communities, and interview friends or neighbors to verify the reported information in the applications.

<sup>16</sup>Specifically, the program aims at the following: 1. To economically empower women so that they can self-sustain themselves and their families; 2. To psychologically empower women so that they can better protect themselves from abuse; 3. To help establish and maintain positive relations with their families and communities; 4. To improve knowledge about and thus access to health care and psychological services.

therapy sessions, stress management, family/couple therapy, mediation, and conflict resolution. These aim to heal war-related trauma, reduce traumatic stress disorder, mediate family conflict situations, support coping mechanisms, build self-confidence, and promote social interaction and peaceful coexistence within their families as well as communities.

The second is the vocational skills and business training. LNRCS offers three options for vocational skills: baking/catering, hairdressing/cosmetology, and tailoring. A participant can choose only one skill, and for those who do not have any preference, LNRCS assigns them one based on capacity constraints. The business training module provides training on handling day-to-day aspects of business, such as client interactions, sales-purchase bookkeeping, and inventory management. At the end of the program, the beneficiaries also receive business startup kits and cash grants to assist setting up their own businesses. However, due to financial constraints and COVID-related disruptions, LNRCS was not able to provide the business capital grants and cash grants for the cohort included in this paper.

The WIN program also includes several other components. The program provides routine health care check-ups and HIV/AIDS awareness and testing sessions in LNRCS's in-house clinic. Child care services are also provided when the beneficiary is at the program center. The adult literacy module targets unschooled participants and trains them in basic arithmetic, and English reading and writing skills. The curriculum is aligned with the Ministry of Education's Alternative Learning Curriculum.

### **2.2.1 Experimental Design**

The sampling frame is the pool of women who voluntarily applied to the program but selected by LNRCS through its need-based screening process. That is, our sample can be characterized by women who are disadvantaged enough for LNRCS to consider them as eligible for the program but at the same time are willing to improve their lives and have high enough agency to apply to such a program.

Several months before program start for every cohort, LNRCS advertises the program in target communities to encourage eligible women to apply. In February 2019 (for the first cohort of this study), LNRCS received about 600-700 applications in total, and after background checks and verification of the applicants' information, it shared with us a list of



450 eligible applicants divided into the “main” list of 400 and a “backup” list of 50 ranked in the order of eligibility status determined by LNRCS. In conducting the baseline survey, for those we couldn’t reach after numerous attempts, we drew from the backup list in order. At the end, we enrolled 395 respondents for the study and conducted baseline in April 2019,<sup>17</sup> and randomly assigned 198 to treatment and 197 to control.

Treatment is stratified at two background characteristics collected in the baseline survey: (a) whether having experienced physical or sexual IPV in the past 12 months, and (b) having been affected by the civil war or having family members who have.<sup>18</sup>

Every woman in the treatment group was invited to the program, but some couldn’t be reached or couldn’t participate in the program for other reasons, and 152 women ultimately enrolled. Moreover, due to an administrative error, 2 people from the control group were invited and joined the program. For analysis, we report both intent-to-treat (ITT) and treatment-on-treated (TOT) estimates.

Our study has been significantly affected by COVID-19 disruptions. The full design was to conduct the experiment over three cohorts for about 1,200 women, each cohort including 400.<sup>19</sup> The first cohort of the study was enrolled in April 2019 and the program implementation ended in March 2020, right before the government lockdowns in Liberia. However, in compliance with government restrictions on in-person activities, our partner LNRCS suspended enrollment for the second cohort. While the government restrictions have been lifted since late 2020, due to financial difficulties, as of this writing, LNRCS hasn’t yet been able to resume the program, and thus this paper includes only one cohort of the sample.

## 2.3 Data Collection

We conducted the baseline survey in April 2019, and the endline in April 2021, which was about 12 months after program completion. Our primary outcome is IPV but the survey also included questions on labor supply, income, expenditure, psychological well-being, social

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<sup>17</sup>We had completed full interviews with 400 women, but LNRCS later decided to drop anyone under 17 from the sample due to potential conflict with school enrollment.

<sup>18</sup>Instances include: relocation, becoming disabled/amputated, family members being killed/dead.

<sup>19</sup>Such pooled design was due to LNRCS’s operational constraints which allow serving up to 200 beneficiaries at a time.

norms around IPV, transfers, and savings.

We used the WHO’s Violence Against Women module<sup>20</sup> to measure IPV outcomes. The module consists of a group of questions each describing an IPV-related episode, providing the respondents with multiple opportunities to report violence. These binary questions are later grouped into: controlling behavior, emotional, physical or sexual IPV. For all questions, we restrict the recall period to the past 12 months prior to the survey date. [Appendix B](#) provides a more comprehensive description of the questionnaire.

## 2.4 IPV Measurement and Safety Protocols

We instituted WHO’s ethics protocol for IPV research ([WHO 2016](#)). Study protocols have been reviewed and approved by the institutional review boards (IRBs) of the University of California, Santa Cruz and the University of Liberia, which is the relevant entity in Liberia. Second, we used the WHO’s Violence Against Women module, which has been employed in multiple contexts and become a “gold standard” for IPV measurement. Third, we hired only female enumerators and provided special training both to safely conduct the interviews and to be prepared emotionally for the work. Fourth, as for the full survey itself, the survey was conducted privately without presence of anyone else than the enumerator and the respondent. Particularly for the IPV module, enumerators were trained to change questions to non-sensitive subjects in the event the survey is interrupted or eavesdropped by a third party. Fifth, while at the beginning of the whole survey respondents went through an informed consent procedure including information for the IPV, we reiterated informed consent right before the IPV module. Sixth, we prepared an information sheet that lists the services available for women experiencing IPV, including contact information for organizations where they can get help. This list was provided to every respondent who went through the IPV questionnaire, regardless of whether they reported any IPV experience.

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<sup>20</sup>[https://www.who.int/gender/violence/who\\_multicountry\\_study/Annex3-Annex4.pdf](https://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/Annex3-Annex4.pdf).

## 2.5 Baseline Summary Statistics

[Table 1](#) presents baseline summary statistics. The average age of women in the control group is about 29 years. They completed 7 years of education, on average, and about two-third of our sample have completed only primary school, while only 25% women have completed secondary school.

For the IPV questions, we restrict the sample to those who are currently partnered or have had an intimate partner 12 months prior to the survey, and the mean for this indicator at baseline was 92%.<sup>21</sup>

In Panel B we find that our sample had minimal access to her own income source or labor force participation. Only 11% report to have any job, and 25% are self-employed. The average income is a mere \$8 dollars per month, with many zeros in the extensive margin. The mean for spouse’s income is twice as large (\$19). While our measures of income might not be exhaustive itself, the mean differences suggest that the women in our sample were not financially independent at baseline.

The baseline prevalence of IPV is very high. About 59% women reported having experienced emotional IPV, while the figure for the more severe form of IPV (physical or sexual) is slightly smaller (51%). This rate is very high compared to the national average reported in the Liberia DHS surveys, where the corresponding figures are 35% and 35% respectively in the 2019-2020 report. However, while our study uses the identical questionnaire to the DHS’s Domestic Violence Module, the numbers are not perfectly comparable, since at our baseline IPV was measured solely in SI, and DHS data are measured via traditional FTFI. In light of the findings in [Section 4](#) and from our sister project in rural Liberia and Malawi ([Park et al. 2021](#)), the reported differences could be due to differing measurement modality, either through enhanced confidentiality or increased measurement error. Yet, the control group’s IPV rates at our endline measured in FTFI only are still high—62% for emotional IPV, 45% for physical IPV, and 23% for sexual IPV.

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<sup>21</sup>We later show in [Table A3](#) how this indicator is balanced between treatment and control at endline.

Table 1: Baseline Summary Statistics and Randomization Check

	(1) Control Mean [SD]	(2) Treatment - Control
<b>Panel A: Demographics</b>		
Age	28.98 [7.29]	1.36* (0.73)
Years of education	7.27 [4.11]	0.45 (0.40)
=1 if completed primary school	0.66	0.06 (0.05)
=1 if completed secondary school	0.25	0.01 (0.04)
=1 if currently partnered or had partner past year	0.92	-0.00 (0.03)
<b>Panel B: Self income and labor supply</b>		
=1 if has own income source	0.34	0.06 (0.05)
=1 if operated own business	0.25	0.04 (0.04)
=1 if had any other temporary/permanent job	0.11	0.01 (0.03)
Total income (USD)	8.38 [27.57]	3.36 (3.09)
<b>Panel C: Household economic well being</b>		
Spouse's income (USD)	19.06 [39.56]	2.11 (4.05)
Per capita expenditure (monthly, USD)	26.76 [25.54]	1.65 (2.63)
Net value of physical assets (USD)	316.32 [1,282.83]	80.88 (133.55)
<b>Panel D: Intimate partner violence</b>		
=1 if experienced the following (past 12 months):		
Controlling behavior	0.83	0.03 (0.04)
Emotional IPV	0.59	0.00 (0.05)
Physical IPV	0.50	-0.01 (0.05)
Sexual IPV	0.16	0.03 (0.04)
Physical or sexual IPV	0.51	-0.01 (0.05)
Emotional, Physical or Sexual IPV	0.67	-0.02 (0.05)

Note: Observations = 395.

## 2.6 Attrition Balance

In [Table A3](#), we check balance for two compliance measures: column (1) shows whether we were able to reach the respondent and complete the endline survey itself, and column (2) refers to whether she was eligible for the IPV section at endline. Given our IPV questions have a recall period of 12 months, we administered the IPV module only to those who are currently partnered or have been so in the past 12 months. Since the IPV analysis is indeed constrained to only those who went through the IPV questionnaire at all, it is necessary to check for any differential attrition in partner status. In addition, given that often in developed countries, IPV survivors are encouraged to leave the violent partner, this is also a meaningful outcome that shows how women in our study select in or out of a relationship.

For the endline survey, we were able to successfully track 359 women (91% of the baseline sample), and the attrition rate is balanced between treatment and control. We use IPV questions with a recall period of 12 months, thus we administer the IPV module to those who currently has an intimate partner or had one within 12 months prior to the survey date. Among the 359 we tracked for endline, 314 were eligible for the IPV module, and as in column (2) of [Table A3](#), we find a 2 percentage point difference between treatment and control in this partner status. While this difference is not statistically significant, we also report the [Lee \(2009\)](#) bound estimates for the effects on IPV outcomes in [Table A5](#).

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Effects on IPV

In this section, we examine the WIN program effects on our primary IPV outcomes. We run the following regression:

$$Y_i = \beta WIN_i + \gamma Y_{0i} + \mathbf{X}'_{ic}\boldsymbol{\theta} + \phi_s + \varepsilon_i, \quad (1)$$

where  $Y_i$  is the outcome of interest for individual  $i$ ,  $WIN_i$  treatment status instrumented with original assignment,  $Y_{0i}$  baseline measurement of the outcome,  $\mathbf{X}'_i$  a vector of individual

characteristics chosen by post-double selection LASSO, and  $\phi_s$  strata fixed effects. The coefficient of interest is  $\beta$ , which is the treatment-on-treated (TOT) estimates for the effects of the female empowerment program. We also report the reduced-form effects of the randomized treatment assignment. Due to problems we discuss further in [Section 4](#), we exclude the random subsample for whom IPV was measured in self-interviewing modules.

The results for IPV are presented in [Table 2](#). Emotional violence decreased by 23 percentage points and physical violence by 26 points from control bases of 62 percent and 45 percent, respectively.<sup>22</sup> The effect sizes we find are very large in comparison to the previous literature. Lighter-touch though similar interventions have shown to have null to modest effects on IPV ([Green et al. 2015](#); [Blattman et al. 2016](#); [Bandiera et al. 2020](#)). The cash transfer literature finds that physical violence reduces by 0-11 percentage points during the period the female receives the transfers ([Buller et al. 2018](#)).

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<sup>22</sup>In [Table A5](#), we show the [Lee \(2009\)](#) bounds results based on the difference in partner status found in [Table A3](#). For emotional IPV, the lower bound becomes statistically insignificant, but the magnitude remains fairly large with the t-statistic well greater than 1. For physical IPV, the lower bound shows a slightly smaller magnitude but remains to be statistically significant.

Table 2: Program Effects on IPV Indices

	(1) Controlling Behavior	(2) Emotional Violence	(3) Physical Violence	(4) Sexual Violence
<b>Panel A. ITT</b>				
WIN treatment	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.17** (0.07)	-0.19*** (0.07)	-0.07 (0.06)
Control mean	0.80	0.62	0.45	0.24
Observations	169	169	169	169
<b>Panel B. TOT</b>				
WIN treatment	-0.03 (0.09)	-0.23** (0.10)	-0.26*** (0.10)	-0.10 (0.09)
Control mean	0.80	0.62	0.45	0.24
Observations	169	169	169	169

Note: Recall period is past 12 months prior to the survey. In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include baseline measurement of outcome, strata fixed effects, and control for ACASI vs. FTFI measurement of IPV. Standard errors in parentheses.

We next look into social norms around physical and sexual IPV. Social norms related to the acceptability of IPV has been one of the widely targeted pathways in the public health literature (Ranganathan et al. 2021). In the “social ecology” framework (Heise 1998), the dynamics between a couple are embedded in many other interpersonal relationships and the community, thus social norms around IPV is a crucial driver of IPV.

To measure social norms related to IPV acceptability, we asked relevant survey questions such as: “In your opinion, is a husband justified in hitting or beating his wife if she argues with him?” We had seven such questions and asked again each referring to what the respondent believes about the community: e.g. “In your community, is it usual for husbands to hit or beat the wife if she argues with him?” We summarize the responses to these binary questions into a z-score per Anderson (2008).

Table 3 presents our findings on social norms around IPV. Either the questions referring to the opinion of the respondent herself or to what she thinks of others in her community,

we find effect sizes of about 0.3 standard deviations. This suggests that the program did reduce the acceptability of physical or sexual IPV among the program beneficiaries and that this might have been a pathway to the reduction in actual IPV experience.

Also note that the control means for respondents’ own perception for each question (Panel A) are remarkably lower than those for others’ (Panel B). One explanation is that providing affirmative responses to such questions might involve stigma or embarrassment so that when the question is directed towards others instead of the respondent herself, she might be more likely to truthfully report her belief.

Table 3: Program Effects on Perceived Justifiability of Physical/Sexual IPV

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	=1 if husband is justified to beat/hit wife when she:						=1 if husband	
	Argues w/ husband	Goes out w/o telling	Doesn’t care children	Burns food	Financial pressure	Refuses sex	is justified to force sex	Z-score
<b>Panel A: One’s own perception</b>								
WIN treatment	-0.07*	-0.04	-0.11***	-0.02	-0.03	-0.01	0.02	-0.29**
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.13)
Control mean	0.09	0.06	0.13	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.03	-0.00
Observations	314	314	314	314	314	314	314	314
<b>Panel B: Others’ perception</b>								
WIN treatment	-0.05	-0.09	-0.15**	-0.13***	-0.04	-0.10**	-0.08*	-0.30**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.13)
Control mean	0.30	0.30	0.28	0.18	0.14	0.17	0.14	0.00
Observations	314	314	314	314	314	314	314	314

Note: In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment. and include strata fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses.

## 3.2 Effects on Economic Livelihoods

Improving women’s economic opportunities have been long argued as a key strategy to reducing IPV. For example, in a household bargaining model from the economics literature, increasing the wife’s economic opportunities outside of the household could heighten her “threat point” and thus the husband would less likely to perpetrate violence in order to keep her in the relationship. On the other hand, if the husband’s motivations are “instrumental”



(e.g. to extract resources from the wife) or “backlash” (e.g. to re-assert dominance), then economically empowering the wife could lead to more IPV.<sup>23</sup>

In [Table 4](#), we look at labor supply outcomes. We find that the program increases labor hours for self employment by 22 hours a month (or 57 percent), while the extensive margin is not statistically distinguishable from zero. Considering the economic empowerment component of the WIN program focuses on vocational skills and business training for small businesses, this finding is not surprising. The null effect of the extensive margin is also consistent with the fact that, for the cohort we’re evaluating, Red Cross was not able to provide business capital grants at the end of the program.

We check whether there was any crowding out from other sources, but we find no significant effects on either casual labor or other income sources. While it’s marginally insignificant, we also find a sizeable increase in total labor hours.

In addition to the pathways discussed above, labor supply could have incapacitation effects. That is, spending more time on her own business or occupation, which is likely outside of the household or intimate relationship, leads to less time spent with her partner and thus leads to a mechanical reduction in IPV.

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<sup>23</sup>See Buller et al. (2018) for discussion of the pathways and review of related cash transfer studies.

Table 4: Program Effects on Labor Supply

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Self employment		Casual labor		Other income		Total	
	=1 if any	hours	=1 if any	hours	=1 if any	hours	=1 if any	hours
<b>Panel A. ITT</b>								
WIN treatment	0.04 (0.05)	16.50* (9.72)	-0.03 (0.03)	1.33 (1.67)	-0.05 (0.03)	-3.51 (4.56)	-0.03 (0.05)	14.32 (10.30)
Control mean	0.46	38.38	0.08	1.34	0.12	11.36	0.63	51.08
Observations	359	359	359	359	359	359	359	359
<b>Panel B. TOT</b>								
WIN treatment	0.06 (0.07)	21.88* (12.87)	-0.04 (0.03)	1.77 (2.20)	-0.06 (0.04)	-4.65 (6.02)	-0.04 (0.07)	19.00 (13.60)
Control mean	0.46	38.38	0.08	1.34	0.12	11.36	0.63	51.08
Observations	359	359	359	359	359	359	359	359

Note: In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include strata fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses.

In [Table 5](#), we examine how the program affected other economic outcomes. Results show that the program increased expenditure by 49 percent. The effect sizes are surprisingly large. In [Table A6](#), we show effects by expenditure categories, and we see that the effects are mostly driven by expenses on food items and nondurables. While we find no significant effects on income, our survey questions for income might not be as exhaustive as in the expenditure section to capture many income sources. Thus expenditure is our preferred measure for economic welfare.

Table 5: Program Effects on Economic Outcomes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Expenditure	Income	Food Security	Net Wealth
<b>Panel A. ITT</b>				
WIN treatment	9.10*** (2.79)	-1.17 (4.11)	0.06 (0.11)	80.25 (101.98)
Control mean	24.81	21.71	-0.00	453.37
Observations	359	359	359	359
<b>Panel B. TOT</b>				
WIN treatment	12.07*** (3.78)	-1.55 (5.41)	0.08 (0.14)	106.44 (134.46)
Control mean	24.81	21.71	-0.00	453.37
Observations	359	359	359	359

Note: In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include strata fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses.

### 3.3 Effects on Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological wellbeing is also a primary outcome of the program, given that counseling is one of the key “response” interventions recommended by public health experts (Ghandour et al. 2015), suggesting that IPV victimization is correlated with mental health disorders (Karen M. Devries et al. 2013; Fulu et al. 2013; Machisa et al. 2017; Trevillion et al. 2012).

We use two main outcomes. First is the distress index from the 10-question Hopkins Symptom Checklist (HSCL-10). HSCL is generally used in clinical and epidemiological settings to measure psychological distress with a fairly straightforward set of 10 questions, such as “In the past 7 days, how often were you blaming yourself for things?” Respondents choose an option among “Not at all,” “A little,” “Quite a bit,” and “Extremely,” and we add up the responses by the assigned numeric codes. Second, we construct a happiness index using the Happiness and Well-being questions from the World Values Survey. An example question is: “In a 1 to 10 scale, how much freedom of choice and control you feel you have

over the way your life turns out?” Responses to such five questions are standardized to a z-score per [Anderson \(2008\)](#).

In [Table 6](#), we find rather modest effects. Both outcomes go in the expected direction, a reduction in distress and an increase in happiness, but the magnitudes are small and not statistically significant. These are indeed surprising, considering the program heavily focuses on psychological therapy sessions. Yet, the endline was 12 months after program completion, and it is possible that the effects quickly dissipated within the year. [Blattman et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Haushofer et al. \(2020\)](#) find similar results where the effect of psychotherapy sessions show significant improvement psychological wellbeing in the short term, but no effect after one year since the last therapy session.

Table 6: Program Effects on Psychosocial Wellbeing

	(1) Distress Index (HSCL-10) <sup>a</sup>	(2) Happiness Index (z-score) <sup>b</sup>
<b>Panel A. ITT</b>		
WIN treatment	-0.01 (0.05)	0.06 (0.10)
Control mean	2.01	0.00
Observations	359	359
<b>Panel B. TOT</b>		
WIN treatment	-0.02 (0.07)	0.07 (0.14)
Control mean	2.01	0.00
Observations	359	359

Note: In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include strata fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup> 10-question Hopkins Symptom Checklist (HSCL-10).

<sup>b</sup> Happiness and Well-being questions from the World Values Survey, standardized per [Anderson \(2008\)](#).

## 4 Threats to Validity

### 4.1 IPV Measurement Error

A possible threat to validity of our analysis comes from the fact that our outcomes are measured by survey responses. In particular, the IPV outcomes are constructed from what women in our sample self report in our surveys, and this might lead to several concerns. In this section we address each of them.

#### Underreporting of IPV in surveys

It is widely concerned that IPV is underreported possibly due to factors like social taboos, feeling of shame, emotional pain, and fear of retribution (WHO 2012; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2013). However, in a professionally administered survey, these factors are likely mitigated owing to the fact that the respondent goes through an informed consent procedure where confidentiality of what she reports is assured and often the enumerator has no reason to interact with the respondent again. Yet even with underreported *levels* of IPV, these do not necessarily introduce bias to treatment effects in an impact evaluation setting, because the (nonclassical) measurement error is canceled out by taking the *differences* between treatment and control.

However, one might be concerned that the true levels of IPV become different between treatment and control (e.g. lower in the treatment if the intervention was effective), and even if the probability of IPV being underreported is constant, this could attenuate the treatment effect.<sup>24</sup> We cannot directly test this in this paper’s setting, because the underreporting propensity is unlikely to be the same between treatment and control (discussed more in following points). Instead, in a companion project where we evaluate the effect of unconditional cash transfers in rural Liberia and Malawi (Park et al. 2021), we introduce an alternative survey tool that could alleviate social desirability bias (as we do in this paper too, and explained more below), and we find no differential cash effects on IPV between survey modes.

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<sup>24</sup>Assume the true prevalence of IPV is  $(y - \beta)$  in treatment and  $y$  in control, and that the proportion of people who truthfully report IPV is  $p < 1$  (constant between treatment and control). Then the estimated treatment effect based on reported IPV rates are  $-p \cdot \beta$ , which is smaller in magnitude than the true treatment effect  $\beta$ .

This finding suggests that underreporting of IPV itself does not bias the treatment effects at least when the measurement error is not correlated with treatment (like unconditional cash transfers).

## **Experimenter demand effects**

Nonetheless, the analysis in this paper could be threatened by differing IPV reporting behavior between treatment and control. One possibility is experimenter demand effects. Given the intervention involves psychotherapy for relationships with spouses or intimate partners, the respondents in the treatment group might believe that the researchers expect them to have a better marital relationship and experience less IPV, and thus feel pressure to underreport IPV. This would overestimate the treatment effects.

Research suggests that experimenter demand effects are modest in many settings even when the researchers made the research hypothesis salient to the study sample (de Quidt et al. 2018; Dhar et al. 2018; Mummolo and E. Peterson 2019). Moreover, our endline survey was conducted by an independent survey firm that the respondents had no reason to associate with the program implementer. Also the timing of the endline was 12 months after the program had ended, so it is less likely that reporting behavior at endline was driven by the treatment.

However, to address this issue more rigorously, we cross-randomized an IPV measurement experiment at endline, where respondents answered IPV questions in either self interviewing (SI) or conventional face-to-face interviewing (FTFI). Whereas under FTFI the enumerator asks each question and the respondent responds verbally, in SI women listen to pre-recorded questions through earphones and make choices on a touchscreen by herself.<sup>25</sup> The main difference is that the SI module allows the respondents to report their responses anonymously to the human enumerator, which could minimize social desirability bias in IPV reporting and thus experimenter demand effects (i.e. the difference in social desirability bias between treatment and control).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>We use one type of SI called audio computer-assisted self interviewing (ACASI) (Figure A2). The ACASI module and the experimental design are almost identical to those of our sister project (Park et al. 2021), where we study effects of SI on IPV reporting in rural Liberia and rural Malawi.

<sup>26</sup>While the original intent of SI is to minimize underreporting by protecting the respondents from feeling

In [Table B5](#), we see the treatment effects are smaller when IPV was measured in SI, which would suggest that our main analysis based on FTFI might be driven by experimenter demand effects. However, the attenuation could be explained by measurement error introduced by the SI survey tool, which we extensively document in [Park et al. \(2021\)](#). If the respondent doesn’t fully understand how to use the tool, she’d be making mistakes when choosing responses (classical measurement error). Since the mean of an individual yes/no IPV question is typically below 0.5, such measurement error would *increase* the rate (biased towards 0.5), and this could attenuate the treatment effect estimate in SI.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, a significant portion of our sample seems to be making mistakes under SI. In [Table B2](#), we find sizeable differences in how people report to a set of innocuous questions between FTFI and SI. For example, while everyone in the control under FTFI said “yes” to the questions “Did it rain in your community last year?” and “Did you sleep at all past week?”, only 82% in the control group and 90% in the treatment group did so under SI. Overall, among seven questions, five of them indicate statistical significance when SI effects are pooled. Except for one question, we don’t find evidence that either the treatment or control group is making less mistakes. Assuming that these questions are truly innocuous and respondents have no other reason to differentially report by FTFI and SI, the results altogether suggest that many are making mistakes in SI and the attenuation in shown [Table B5](#) is not necessarily explained by experimenter demand effects.

## Enhanced sensitization of IPV

It’s also possible that IPV reporting behavior is correlated with treatment in the other direction. While the treatment group becomes more sensitized of their IPV experience and more likely to truthfully report IPV, the control group might not be sensitized enough and

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shame or discomfort, it is also possible on the other hand that the respondent could feel more comfortable sharing unfortunate experiences with a human being. Conducting the IPV module is typically considered a conversation, and often respondents seek counseling from the human enumerator ([M. Ellsberg et al. 2001](#)).<sup>27</sup> Suppose the reported IPV rates under FTFI are  $(y - \beta)$  for treatment and  $y$  for control. Under SI, assume there are two types:  $p$  fully understand the module and respond in the same way she would have under FTFI, and  $(1 - p)$  make mistakes under SI and randomly choose between yes and no. Then the reported rates under SI are  $p \cdot (y - \beta) + (1 - p) \cdot 0.5$  for the treatment and  $p \cdot y + (1 - p) \cdot 0.5$  for the control, and taking the difference, the estimated treatment effect under SI is  $-p \cdot \beta$ . This is smaller in magnitude than that under FTFI,  $-\beta$ , and the difference is determined by how many people don’t understand the SI tool  $(1 - p)$ .

remain underreporting IPV. This would *underestimate* the treatment effect. One could have such concern given that we find treatment effects in perceived justifiability of IPV in [Table 3](#). However, it's noteworthy even among the control group, a vast majority thinks violence is not justified. One deviation is for the situation where the wife neglects the children; 13% reported that physical violence can be justified in this case, whereas the means for other questions are 3-9%. Yet, at least from what's reported, our study sample overall appears to be a context where already violence is not justified in most cases. However, even if IPV reporting behavior is significantly affected by this factor, the main results we find on IPV would be the lower bounds of the true effect.

### **Control group pretending to look worse**

One might be concerned that the control group reports higher rates of IPV in order to look more disadvantaged. This might be plausible because our sampling frame were women who had voluntarily applied to the program for consideration. Even though this was more than two years prior to our endline, it's possible that they are still willing to be eligible for future program enrollments. However, as explained earlier, respondents had virtually no reason to link our enumeration team to the program or Red Cross. In the informed consent form we administer at the beginning of every survey, we make it clear that no personal or identifiable information will be shared with any party, including the government or any non-government organizations. Therefore, it's unlikely that anyone in our study sample believes what she reports to us could affect her prospects for any program.

## **4.2 Incapacitation Effect**

Another type of concern is that IPV experience might be reduced in the treatment group mechanically because they spend more time in the program. This could be especially concerning since the treatment group had to attend the program center 4-5 hours a day, which amounts to at least 20-25 hours a week physically away from the spouse.<sup>28</sup> However, our endline survey was conducted about 12 months after the program had ended, and we have

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<sup>28</sup>While some of controlling behavior and emotional IPV can be perpetrated remotely (e.g. over the phone), physical and sexual IPV do require physical contact.



no outcomes measured for more than 12 months prior to the survey. Therefore, the outcomes do not capture anything that happened while the program was running. Yet, *after* the program, as we find in Table 4, treatment group worked more outside of the household (and away from her partner), and it’s possible this was one of the mechanisms through which IPV was reduced.

## 5 Conclusion

Our randomized evaluation of a multifaceted female empowerment program finds that it considerably reduces emotional and physical IPV experienced by women, restricting the analysis to IPV outcomes measured in a conventional setting. We also find sizeable effects on labor supply and expenditure. After 12 months since the program, we find small insignificant effects on psychological wellbeing.

These findings suggest that a holistic approach to IPV prevention is effective. This is consistent with the public health literature on IPV emphasizing that the multi-level factors of IPV are important in designing interventions. One caveat of this study is that we cannot quantify the marginal benefit of a single program component. We leave this to future research.

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# Appendix A

Figure A1: Study Timeline and COVID-19 Disruptions

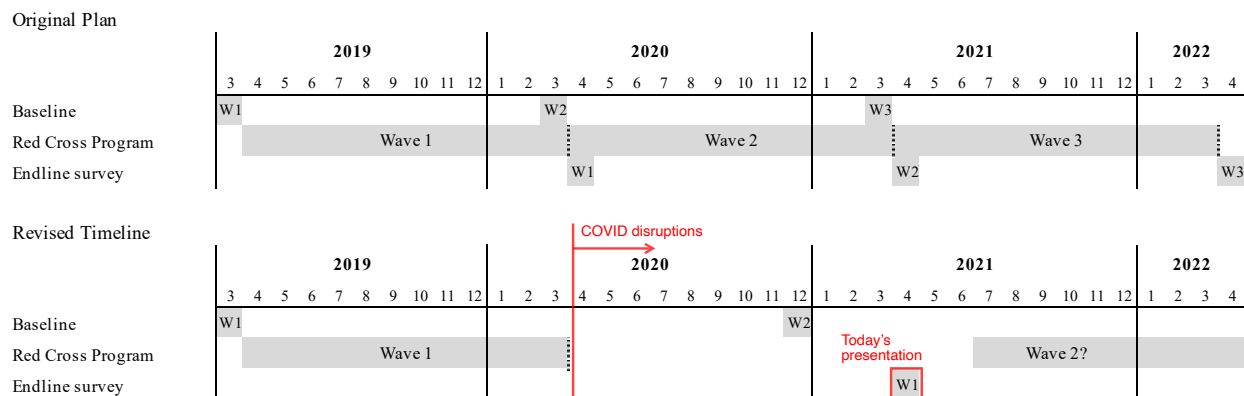


Figure A2: Self Interviewing (SI) Survey Module

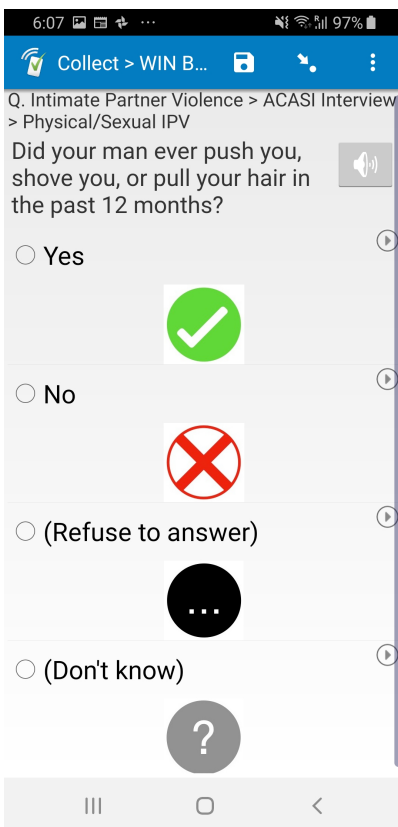


Table A1: WIN Program Components

Program Component	Description
Psychological support	One-to-one and group counselling, stress management, family/couple therapy
Literacy classes	Reading and writing curriculum by Ministry of Education
Child care	During program participation
Medical checkups	Free primary medical check-ups at Red Cross clinic
Vocational skills training	Baking, cosmetology, and tailoring
Entrepreneurship training	Financial literacy, business planning/management, etc.
Business start-up capital	250 USD worth of capital along with 30 USD cash grant

Table A2: Selection Criteria of WIN Program

1. Ex-combatant	5. Single mother/self-supported
2. Previous commercial sex worker	6. Illiterate
3. Victims of rape/domestic violence	7. Economically vulnerable
4. Witness of extreme violence	8. Drug user

Table A3: Attrition Balance

	(1)	(2)
	=1 if completed endline survey	=1 if completed IPV survey at endline <sup>a</sup>
WIN treatment	0.00 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.04)
Control mean	0.91	0.81
Overall mean	0.91	0.79
Observations	395	395

Note: Regressions include strata fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup> IPV questionnaire is administered to only those who are currently married or has an intimate partner, or have been so in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Table A4: Program Effects on Frequency-integrated IPV Indices

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Frequency-integrated Indices <sup>a</sup>			
	Emotional IPV	Physical IPV	Sexual IPV	Any IPV
<b>Panel A. ITT</b>				
WIN treatment	-0.15 (0.14)	-0.30*** (0.11)	-0.18 (0.12)	-0.35*** (0.11)
Control mean	0.00	-0.00	-0.00	0.00
Observations	169	169	169	169
<b>Panel B. TOT</b>				
WIN treatment	-0.20 (0.19)	-0.42** (0.16)	-0.25 (0.17)	-0.48*** (0.16)
Control mean	0.00	-0.00	-0.00	0.00
Observations	169	169	169	169

Note: In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include baseline measurement of outcome, strata fixed effects, and control for ACASI vs. FTFI measurement of IPV. Standard errors in parentheses.



Table A5: Program Effects on IPV Indices - Lee Bounds

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Emotional IPV			Physical IPV		
	Baseline	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Baseline	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
WIN treatment	-0.20** (0.10)	-0.15 (0.10)	-0.26*** (0.10)	-0.22** (0.10)	-0.16* (0.10)	-0.25*** (0.10)
Control mean	0.62	0.59	0.68	0.45	0.41	0.49
Observations	169	162	162	169	162	162
	Sexual IPV			Any IPV		
	Baseline	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Baseline	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
WIN treatment	-0.10 (0.08)	0.00 (0.08)	-0.11 (0.09)	-0.18** (0.09)	-0.14 (0.10)	-0.23** (0.09)
Control mean	0.24	0.17	0.26	0.66	0.63	0.72
Observations	169	162	162	169	162	162

Note: In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include baseline measurement of outcome, strata fixed effects, and control for ACASI vs. FTFI measurement of IPV. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table A6: Program Effects on Expenditure Items

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Food	Nondurables	Clothes	Education	Health	Religious contributions	Family events	Nonmedical emergency
<b>Panel A. ITT</b>								
WIN treatment	3.74** (1.65)	4.67 (2.99)	1.17 (1.87)	0.69 (2.20)	0.42 (1.43)	0.33 (0.64)	-0.54 (1.52)	0.10 (0.13)
Control mean	10.05	27.06	6.54	15.15	6.07	2.99	5.07	0.11
Observations	359	359	359	359	359	359	359	359
<b>Panel B. TOT</b>								
WIN treatment	4.96** (2.21)	6.19 (4.00)	1.55 (2.47)	0.92 (2.90)	0.56 (1.88)	0.44 (0.85)	-0.72 (2.01)	0.14 (0.16)
Control mean	10.05	27.06	6.54	15.15	6.07	2.99	5.07	0.11
Observations	359	359	359	359	359	359	359	359

Note: In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include baseline measurement of outcome, and strata fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table A7: Program Effects on Income

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Respondent			Spouse's income
	Self employment	Casual labor	Other job	
<b>Panel A. ITT</b>				
WIN treatment	3.63 (3.63)	-1.25 (0.80)	-3.55 (2.23)	-0.99 (5.79)
Control mean	12.40	1.91	7.40	33.44
Observations	359	359	359	359
<b>Panel B. TOT</b>				
WIN treatment	4.82 (4.79)	-1.66 (1.06)	-4.71 (2.95)	-1.32 (7.63)
Control mean	12.40	1.91	7.40	33.44
Observations	359	359	359	359

Note: In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include baseline measurement of outcome, and strata fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table A8: Program Effects on Assets

	(1) Business capital	(2) Durables	(3) Livestock	(4) Savings	(5) Debt
<b>Panel A. ITT</b>					
WIN treatment	5.90 (16.14)	63.95 (90.02)	0.31 (9.16)	13.87 (17.01)	3.79 (3.44)
Control mean	44.19	361.22	23.00	30.46	5.49
Observations	359	359	359	359	359
<b>Panel B. TOT</b>					
WIN treatment	7.83 (21.24)	84.82 (118.73)	0.42 (12.07)	18.40 (22.38)	5.02 (4.53)
Control mean	44.19	361.22	23.00	30.46	5.49
Observations	359	359	359	359	359

Note: In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include baseline measurement of outcome, and strata fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table A9: Program Effects on Interpersonal Transfers

	(1) Transfers sent	(2) Transfers sent	(3) Transfers received	(4) Transfers received
	Spouse	Non-spouse	Spouse	Non-spouse
<b>Panel A. ITT</b>				
WIN treatment	-0.22 (0.48)	-1.53 (1.48)	2.59 (4.52)	1.68 (2.89)
Control mean	1.40	6.41	37.40	8.15
Observations	278	359	278	359
<b>Panel B. TOT</b>				
WIN treatment	-0.28 (0.61)	-2.03 (1.95)	3.33 (5.77)	2.23 (3.80)
Control mean	1.40	6.41	37.40	8.15
Observations	278	359	278	359

Note: In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include baseline measurement of outcome, and strata fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses.

## Appendix B: Possible Threats to Validity

Table B1: SI Screening

	(1) Mean (=1 if yes)
Are you a woman?	0.98
Do you live in [the county/district where the survey is being conducted]?	0.97
In the past week, did you sleep, during day or night?	0.97
In the past year, did it rain in your village one time or more?	0.96
=1 if yes to all questions	0.90
=1 if yes to woman and rain questions	0.98
Observations	303

Note: These four questions were asked in SI to everyone included in SI measurement experiment.

Table B2: SI Effects on Placebo Questions, by WIN treatment status

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	Questions for which answer should be yes:				Questions for which answer could be yes/no:				
	Index								
	Rain	Sleep	%(yes)	=1 if yes to all	Farm work	Market	Int'l travel	Rice	Meat
SI $\times$ WIN control ( $\beta$ )	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.14*** (0.04)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.18*** (0.05)	0.11** (0.05)	0.08 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.10*** (0.04)	-0.16* (0.08)
SI $\times$ WIN treatment ( $\gamma$ )	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.09** (0.04)	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.10** (0.05)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.07 (0.05)	0.01 (0.04)	-0.13*** (0.04)	-0.13 (0.08)
WIN	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.05* (0.03)	0.03 (0.04)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.01 (0.08)
FTFI $\times$ WIN control mean	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.04	0.84	0.06	1.00	0.56
$p$ -value ( $\beta = \gamma$ )	0.609	0.361	0.356	0.241	0.053	0.890	0.334	0.617	0.737
Observations	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298
<i>Post-estimation calculation</i>									
Pooled SI effects	-0.06	-0.11	-0.09	-0.14	0.05	0.07	-0.01	-0.11	-0.14
$p$ -value	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.139	0.049	0.659	0.000	0.016

Note: Regressions include individual controls (including all variables in Table B6). “Screen Pass” is defined by selecting “yes” to all questions in Table B1. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table B3: SI Effects on IPV Questions, by WIN treatment status

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	=1 if responded yes to individual question in the following category:				All
	Controlling Behavior	Emotional IPV	Physical IPV	Sexual IPV	questions pooled
SI $\times$ WIN control ( $\beta$ )	0.01 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.06)	-0.06 (0.04)	0.06 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.04)
SI $\times$ WIN treatment ( $\gamma$ )	0.11*** (0.04)	0.04 (0.06)	0.06 (0.04)	0.05 (0.05)	0.07** (0.04)
WIN	-0.11*** (0.04)	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.12*** (0.04)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.10** (0.04)
FTFI $\times$ WIN control mean	0.37	0.38	0.22	0.16	0.29
$p$ -value ( $\beta = \gamma$ )	0.097	0.409	0.057	0.947	0.142
Number of individuals	298	298	297	298	298
Observations	2,056	1,184	1,776	889	5,905
<i>Post-estimation calculation</i>					
Pooled SI effects	0.06	0.01	0.00	0.06	0.03
$p$ -value	0.046	0.845	0.963	0.112	0.255

Note: Observations at respondent-question level. See [Table B4](#) for index-level results. Regressions include question-level fixed effects. Standard errors clustered at individual level in parentheses.

Table B4: SI Effects on IPV Indices, by WIN treatment status

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	=1 if responded yes to <i>any</i> question in the following category:				Any IPV
	Controlling Behavior	Emotional IPV	Physical IPV	Sexual IPV	
SI $\times$ WIN control ( $\beta$ )	0.09 (0.07)	-0.04 (0.08)	-0.14* (0.08)	0.09 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.08)
SI $\times$ WIN treatment ( $\gamma$ )	0.18*** (0.06)	0.09 (0.08)	0.01 (0.07)	0.12* (0.07)	0.10 (0.08)
WIN	-0.02 (0.07)	-0.16** (0.08)	-0.21*** (0.08)	-0.08 (0.07)	-0.15* (0.08)
FTEFI $\times$ WIN control mean	0.77	0.63	0.47	0.24	0.67
<i>p</i> -value ( $\beta = \gamma$ )	0.290	0.271	0.164	0.762	0.301
Observations	298	298	298	298	298
<i>Post-estimation calculation</i>					
Pooled SI effects	0.14	0.03	-0.07	0.11	0.04
<i>p</i> -value	0.002	0.629	0.207	0.037	0.478

Note: See [Table B3](#) for question-level results.

Table B5: Program Effects and SI Effects on IPV Indices - TOT - Screen Pass only

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	=1 if experienced any instance of the following category:				Any
	Controlling Behavior	Emotional IPV	Physical IPV	Sexual IPV	IPV
<b>Panel A. ITT</b>					
WIN $\times$ FTFI ( $\gamma$ )	-0.01 (0.07)	-0.15** (0.08)	-0.20*** (0.08)	-0.07 (0.07)	-0.14* (0.07)
WIN $\times$ SI ( $\beta$ )	0.07 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.08)	-0.06 (0.07)	-0.04 (0.08)	-0.04 (0.08)
Non-WIN $\times$ FTFI mean	0.77	0.63	0.47	0.24	0.67
Non-WIN $\times$ SI mean	0.84	0.54	0.29	0.31	0.60
$p$ -value ( $\beta = \gamma$ )	0.315	0.280	0.177	0.755	0.339
Observations	298	298	298	298	298
<i>Post-estimation calculation</i>					
Pooled program effects	0.03	-0.10	-0.13	-0.06	-0.09
$p$ -value	0.508	0.083	0.014	0.248	0.108
<b>Panel B. TOT</b>					
WIN $\times$ FTFI ( $\gamma$ )	0.00 (0.09)	-0.25** (0.10)	-0.28*** (0.10)	-0.10 (0.09)	-0.22** (0.10)
WIN $\times$ SI ( $\beta$ )	0.12* (0.06)	0.01 (0.10)	-0.03 (0.09)	-0.04 (0.09)	0.00 (0.10)
Non-WIN $\times$ FTFI mean	0.77	0.63	0.47	0.24	0.67
Non-WIN $\times$ SI mean	0.84	0.54	0.29	0.31	0.60
$p$ -value ( $\beta = \gamma$ )	0.296	0.074	0.060	0.584	0.111
Observations	298	298	298	298	298
<i>Post-estimation calculation</i>					
Pooled program effects	0.06	-0.13	-0.16	-0.07	-0.11
$p$ -value	0.293	0.079	0.020	0.254	0.108

Note: Sample includes only those who passed screening, i.e. those who selected “yes” to all questions in [Table B1](#). In Panel B, regressions are TOT estimates, where the treatment indicator is instrumented with the original assignment to treatment, and include baseline measurement of outcome, and strata fixed effects. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table B6: SI Randomization Check

	(1) Control Mean [SD]	(2) Treatment - Control
<b>Panel A. Demographics</b>		
=1 if currently married or has partner	0.88	0.02 (0.04)
Age	30.44 [6.79]	1.74** (0.83)
Number of household members	5.06 [2.71]	0.72** (0.35)
<b>Panel B. Education and digital literacy</b>		
Years of education	8.28 [4.14]	-0.52 (0.47)
=1 if able to write/read in English	0.84	0.03 (0.04)
=1 if has access to mobile phone	0.89	-0.00 (0.04)
<b>Panel C. Household wealth</b>		
Food security index (z-score)	0.00 [1.00]	-0.05 (0.12)
Total expenditure (monthly)	124.08 [83.00]	3.06 (10.21)
Net value of durables, livestock, and financial asset	421.43 [828.44]	121.86 (108.39)
Non-agricultural income (monthly)	21.45 [38.75]	3.96 (4.77)
<b>Panel D. Empowerment-related outcomes</b>		
=1 if has her own income source	0.60	0.04 (0.06)
Number of children	2.35 [1.68]	0.47** (0.20)
Observations	303	



Table B7: Post-SI Survey of Technical Difficulties Self-reported by Respondents

	(1) Mean (=1 if yes)
Was the audio loud enough to hear?	0.99
Was the audio speaking speed okay?	0.98
Was it easy for you to remember the meaning of pictures?	0.97
Was it easy for you to choose answers on the screen?	0.97
Was it easy for you to move between questions on the screen?	0.97
Observations	145

Note: Questions were asked only to those in the SI treatment group (i.e., the FTFI group did not get these questions).

## Appendix C: Survey instrument

### Controlling behavior

1. Did your man ever try to keep you from seeing your friends in the past 12 months?
2. Did your man ever try to stop you from meeting or speaking to your family of birth in the past 12 months?
3. Did your man ever need to know where you are all the time in the past 12 months?
4. Did your man ever stop talking to you or treat you with no interest in the past 12 months?
5. Did your man ever get angry if you speak with another man in the past 12 months?
6. Did your man often think that you are unfaithful in the past 12 months?
7. In the past 12 months, did your man ever expect you to ask for his approval before you go to a health clinic or hospital?

### Emotional IPV<sup>29</sup>

1. Did your man ever insult you or make you feel bad about yourself in the past 12 months?
2. Did your man ever make you feel small in front of other people in the past 12 months?
3. Did your man ever mean to scare you (for example, by the way he looked at you, by yelling and bursting things) in the past 12 months?
4. Did your man ever threaten to hurt you or someone you care about in the past 12 months?

### Physical IPV<sup>29</sup>

1. Did your man ever slap you or throw something at you that could hurt you in the past 12 months?
2. Did your man ever push you, shove you, or pull your hair in the past 12 months?
3. Did your man ever hit you with his hand or with something else that could hurt you in the past 12 months?
4. Did your man ever kick you, drag you or beat you up in the past 12 months?
5. Did your man ever mean to choke or burn you in the past 12 months?

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<sup>29</sup> For each IPV question, if the answer is “yes”, a follow-up question about frequency appears, asking whether it happened (i) one or two times, (ii) three to five times, or (iii) more than five times.

6. Did your man ever threaten to use or actually use a gun, knife or other weapon against you in the past 12 months?

## **Sexual IPV<sup>29</sup>**

1. Did your man ever physically force you to do man and woman business when you did not want to in the past 12 months?
2. Did you ever do man and woman business when you did not want to because you were afraid of what your man might do in the past 12 months?
3. In the past 12 months, while doing man and woman business, did your man ever force you to do something that made you feel small or bad about yourself?

## **Non-sensitive placebo questions**

1. Did it rain in your village one time or more in the past year?
2. Did you do any farm work in the past year?
3. Did you sleep in the past week, during day or night?
4. Did you go to the market in the past week?
5. Did you travel outside of Liberia in the past week?
6. Will you, or anyone in your household, eat any rice next week, one time or more?
7. Will you, or anyone in your household, eat any type of meat next week, one time or more?