

## SAFE's impact on spousal violence against women and girls

### High levels of spousal violence against women in Bangladesh demand evidence-based and effective programmes.

- Violence by spouse/partner is the most common type of violence that women and girls experience.
- One in two ever-married women of reproductive age reported ever experiencing spousal physical or sexual violence in Bangladesh. Levels of this violence are higher in urban slums than in urban non-slum and rural areas of Bangladesh.
- Gender inequitable attitudes are important predictors of spousal violence. These attitudes are more common in urban slums than in non-slum areas.<sup>1</sup>
- Only one in five physically abused slum-dwelling women seeks help. However, only 2% of them approached formal sources for support.<sup>2</sup>

### SAFE's objectives to reduce violence:

- Promote gender equitable attitudes
- Reduce spousal violence against women and girls
- Increase help seeking

### Evaluation methods

#### Quantitative

Cluster randomised controlled trial with a sample of 5,336 women and 3,237 men distributed across three different study arms

#### Qualitative

Thirty four in-depth interviews, 5 Key informant interviews and 5 focus group discussions with married women and men

### SAFE's impact on males' gender attitudes

- Men's gender-equitable attitudes increased in the study arm featuring group sessions for males and females.
- The female-only group intervention did not result in any positive changes in men's gender attitudes. In the female-only group arm, men's attitudes favouring male prerogative in gender relations increased.

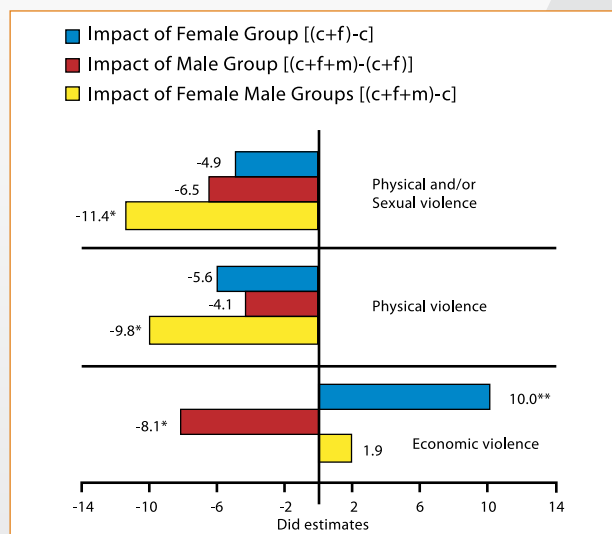
### SAFE's impact on spousal violence against women and girls

- Physical and sexual spousal violence against adolescent girls reduced when both females and males participated in group sessions.
- Economic violence against adolescent girls increased when only females were targeted, but decreased when men were targeted.
- Interactive female group sessions reduced economic violence against women aged 20 to 29.

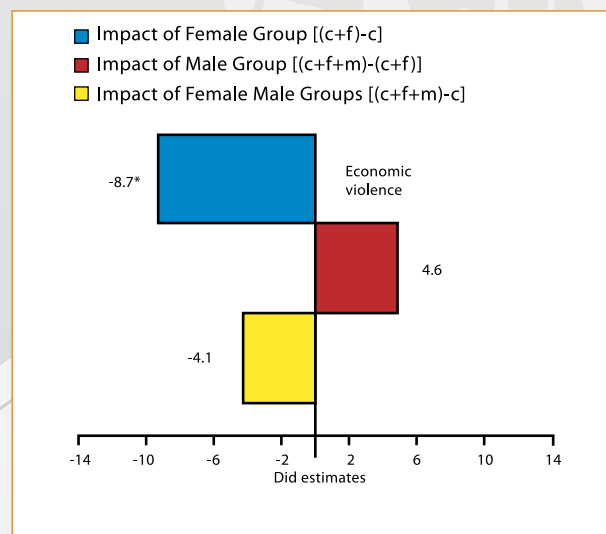
### SAFE's impact on survivors' help seeking behaviours

- Help seeking from informal sources increased when females and males were both targeted.

**Figure 1: SAFE's impact on spousal violence against currently married adolescent girls in Dhaka slums, percentage points**



**Figure 2: SAFE's impact on spousal violence against currently married young females in Dhaka slums, percentage points**



**In summary**

SAFE demonstrates a reduction in spousal violence against women and girls in urban slum communities. Adolescent girls benefitted most from the SAFE intervention, highlighting the promise of working with adolescent girls before they are encumbered with the disadvantages of early marriage and early childbirth. Targeting both females and males is important to promote gender equitable attitudes and to reduce violence. Both informal and formal sources of support should be strengthened for survivors.

“Many husbands abuse their wives sexually. But it is not right to force someone to have sex. My life went through a change in this regard. I have asked other group members and they are also experiencing a positive change in this. We argue (with our husbands) that if we are sick and tired we would not like to have sex. If we are willing, sex will be pleasurable and there will be no need to get it by force.”

**A SAFE group member**

What works	What does not work
<b>Addressing gender inequitable attitudes of men</b>	
Targeting both males and females	Targeting females only
<b>Addressing spousal violence against women and girls</b>	
Targeting both females and males for reducing physical or sexual violence	Targeting adolescent females only for reducing economic violence against adolescent girls
Targeting males in addition to females for reducing economic violence against adolescent girls	
Targeting females only for reducing economic violence against young women	

<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT), MEASURE Evaluation, International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), Associates for Community and Population Research (ACPR). 2006 Bangladesh Urban Health Survey. Dhaka and Chapel Hill, NC: NIPORT, MEASURE Evaluation, ICDDR,B, ACPR; 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Parvin K, Sultana N, Naved RT. Spousal violence against women and help seeking behaviour. Naved RT, Amin S, editors. Growing up safe and healthy (SAFE): baseline report on sexual and reproductive health and rights and violence against women and girls in Dhaka slums. Dhaka: icddr,b; 2012.