



# SEXUAL & GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: BASELINE FINDINGS

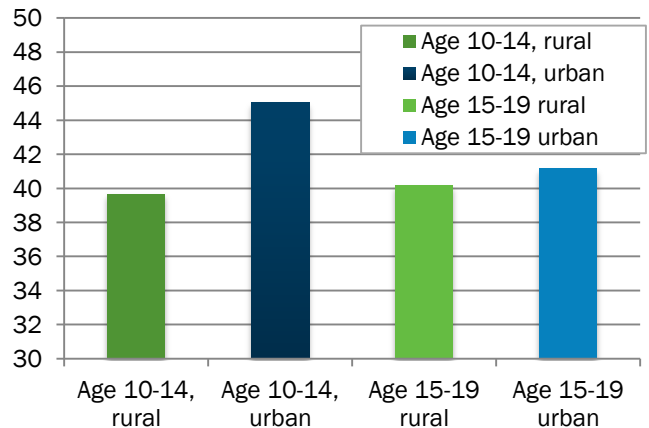
The Adolescent Girls Empowerment Program (AGEP) is a program for girls ages 10-19 in rural and urban Zambia that aims to find the best ways to improve their social, health, and economic resources. The program involves over 10,000 girls participating in weekly girls' group meetings, receiving health vouchers and opening savings accounts. Over 5,000 girls, unmarried at baseline, are enrolled in a randomized, controlled trial and are being followed over four years – including the two years of the program and two years after. This brief describes the characteristics of these girls at baseline.

## INTRODUCTION

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a pervasive global health problem. Women and girls are most at risk, and consequences include physical injury, psychological trauma, unwanted pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

- The 2007 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) found that 20% of Zambian women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced some form of sexual violence. This proportion does not take into account sexual violence occurring to girls younger than 15.
- Girls and boys often internalize inequitable gender norms early in life, laying a foundation for unequal sexual relations. There is a correlation between such norms and the experience of violence. For example, women who agree that there are circumstances under which it is acceptable for a husband to beat his wife are more likely to report ever having experienced violence. (UN Millennium Project, 2006).
- Violence against women is associated with many adverse outcomes, including unintended pregnancy and HIV infection.

### Percent of AGEP participants reporting that they have experienced domestic violence and/or physical abuse



## Domestic violence

More than 2 in 5 girls enrolled in the AGEP study have reported that they have experienced domestic violence and/or physical abuse. Younger girls in urban settings are more likely to have experienced violence as compared to their rural counterparts. There is no difference in experience of violence between the older girls in urban and rural areas.

The most common perpetrator of acts of violence against girls enrolled in the AGEP program is their mother/stepmother, with 62% of girls in rural areas and 50% of girls in urban areas within the younger cohort reporting that they have experienced acts of violence from their mother. Within the older cohort, the mother/stepmother is responsible for acts of violence for roughly half the girls in both urban and rural areas.

The second most common perpetrator for acts of violence is a teacher. In rural areas over 40% of girls had experienced violence by a teacher and just over one-third of girls in urban areas had experienced acts of violence from a teacher in both the younger and older cohorts.

## Forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts

1 in 5 girls in the AGEP study sample reported that they had been forced to have sexual intercourse or to perform other sexual acts. Girls enrolled in AGEP who have been forced to have sexual intercourse or perform other sexual acts reported that this happened at an average age of 14 years.

The most common perpetrator of forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts was a boyfriend, followed by a friend/acquaintance.

Among girls who were HIV+, 35% reported having ever been raped. Among girls who were HIV-, 20% reported having ever been raped. (Questions on sexual violence were only asked of those girls in the older cohort, ages 15-19.)

## Attitudes about SGBV

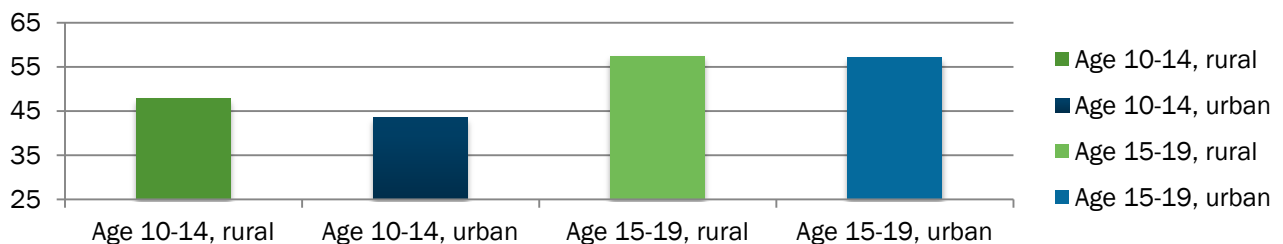
As girls get older, a higher proportion of them report that wife beating is acceptable; 3 out of 5 girls accept wife beating in at least one situation.

Among girls who reported that their father beat their mother, almost two-thirds agree that wife beating is acceptable in at least one situation. Among girls whose father did not beat their mother, however, only half agree that wife beating is acceptable in at least one situation.

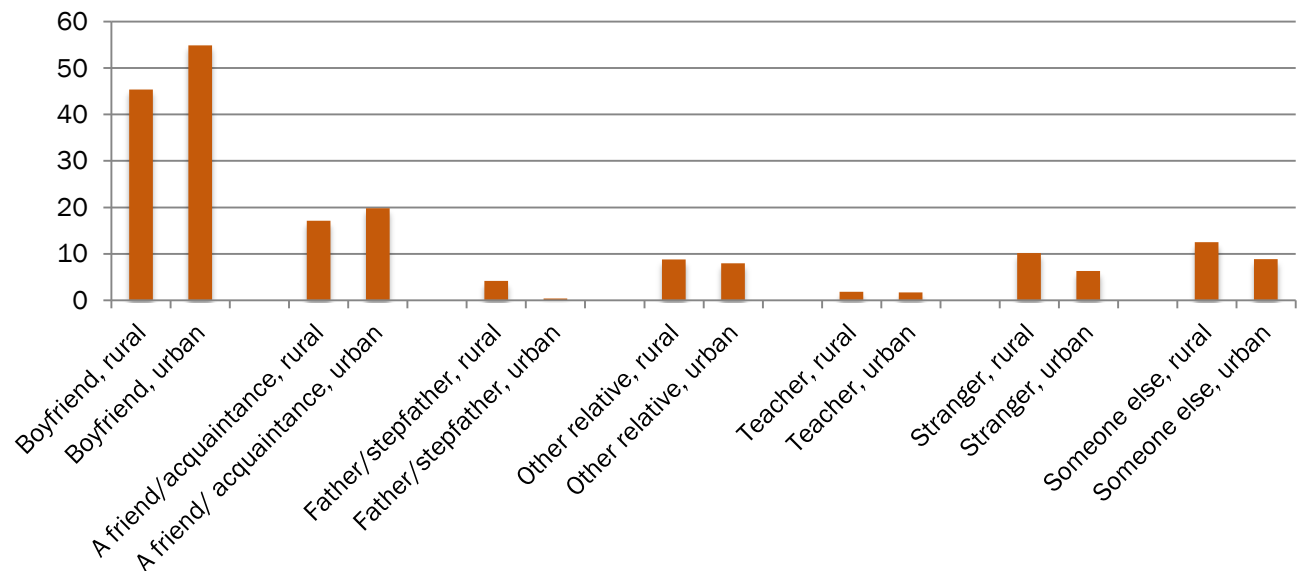
The average number of situations in which girls report wife beating is acceptable is higher among girls in the older age cohort. In both age cohorts, the belief that wife beating is acceptable is higher among girls in rural areas.

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### Percent who believe wife beating is acceptable in at least one situation



### Perpetrators of forced sexual intercourse/other sexual acts



### CONTACT INFORMATION

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