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Interventions for Violence Prevention among Young Female Hawkers in Motor Parks in South-Western Nigeria: A Review of Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

An intervention study was carried out among hawkers, drivers, instructors, police and judicial officers to reduce the incidence of violence against young female hawkers in three states of south-western Nigeria. Knowledge and experience of violence among the hawkers before and after the interventions were then compared. Findings show that they had greater knowledge of the different types of violence ($p < 0.05$), were more aware of their vulnerability to violence (99.4% after compared to 82.7% before intervention) and sought help or redress (76.3% after compared to 45.8% before intervention) following violent acts. Sexual violence was the commonest type experienced (30.4% and 15.7% at base line and end line respectively). The rate of violence also decreased. We conclude that multidisciplinary interventions that empower women economically and educationally and involve all stakeholders are effective in preventing violence against women. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2003; 7[1]: 71–82)

RÉSUMÉ

Interventions pour la prévention de la violence chez les jeunes colporteuses dans les gares d'autos au sud-ouest du Nigéria: une critique de l'efficacité. Il s'agit d'une étude d'intervention concernant le développement et la distribution des matériels éducatifs, les ateliers de formation/sensibilisation et l'assurance des microcredit aux colporteurs, aux chauffeurs, aux instituteurs, à la police et aux agents judiciaires dans trois Etats du sud-ouest du Nigéria, afin de réduire l'incidence de violence chez ce groupe d'individus. Nous avons comparé la connaissance et l'expérience de violence chez les colporteuses avant et après les interventions. Les résultats ont montré qu'elles avaient une meilleure connaissance de différents types de violence ($p < 0,05$), qu'elles étaient plus conscientes de leur vulnérabilité à la violence (99,4% après, par rapport à 82,7% avant, l'intervention) et qu'elles ont sollicité l'aide ou la réparation (76,3% après, par rapport à 45,8% avant, l'intervention) suite à des actes de violence. La violence sexuelle était le type d'expérience le plus commun (30,4% et 15,7% à la ligne de base et à la ligne de fond respectivement). Le taux de violence a diminué aussi. Comme conclusion, l'étude affirme que les interventions multidisciplinaires qui responsabilisent la femme sur les plans économique et éducatif et qui impliquent tous les intéressés sont efficaces pour la prévention de la violence contre la femme. (*Rev Afr Santé Reprod* 2003; 7[1]: 71–82)

KEY WORDS: *Violence, women, gender, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is a major public health concern and a violation of human rights.¹ The World Health Organization² estimates that at least a man has physically or sexually abused one in every five of the world's female population at some time in her life. Women are at risk of these forms of violence at all stages of their life, from the womb to the tomb.³ Although gender-based violence is common in women of all ages, adolescents and youths are more greatly affected.^{4, 5}

Women have long been involved in the informal economy in West Africa.⁶ The trading in foodstuffs, clothing and many household consumer products has been a principal occupation of these women especially in south-western Nigeria. Hawking of goods on small trays balanced on the head is often the entry point into trading, especially among young girls who help their mothers and guardians sell goods after school or as apprentices to women shop owners. Thus, young girls are often involved in trading to supplement family income and are an important economic resource for the family.⁶ Also, hawking helps prepare them for adult roles.

The motor park is a wide expanse of land with cars and buses on different queues. It is a public place that is occasionally walled round by a low fence. The vehicles pick up and

drop off passengers who are on intercity travel. Vehicles are parked according to the cities/towns they ply. There are bus conductors who call out the routes and destinations and invite travellers to come on board. Vehicles set out on a journey only after all the seats have been filled. The motor park is a male-dominated environment consisting of different work groups of men such as motor drivers, bus conductors, traders, auto mechanics and labourers. The National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), the umbrella union for all commercial drivers, is the custodian of motor parks and it controls all activities that take place therein.⁷ An office of the union is located within the premises of every motor park. However, in addition to these groups of men, touts and other miscreants abound. Generally, men working in motor parks are notorious for social and moral misconduct. Within the parks are several small kiosks and shops owned mostly by women traders from where the hawkers replenish their stock.

Young female hawkers (YFH) who trade in motor parks in big cities are particularly vulnerable to all forms of violence including sexual exploitation by men. For example, Orubuloye et al⁸ found that 15% of 467 hawkers surveyed in Ibadan lost their virginity to rape by older men, while 90% reported that drivers, passengers and other men frequently made sexually suggestive advances at them. Ajuwon⁹ reported similar findings; 48.9% of apprentices in Ibadan gave a history of sexual harassment in the course of their work. The men prefer young girls as sexual partners because they assume that they are sexually inexperienced and as such are less likely to be infected with sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, the cultural taboos in Nigeria assign a passive role to females when in relationship with men.¹⁰⁻¹² Girls are also vulnerable to economic exploitation and physical abuse by the men.¹⁰ Pick et al found that one in every four street traders experience some form of verbal or physical abuse, while 7% reported that they had been sexually harassed.^{14,15} Consequently, the girls are vulnerable to all forms of violence from men.

Based on these reports, multi-focused interventions were designed and implemented to determine their effectiveness in ending violence against women (VAW). This paper therefore highlights the baseline findings, intervention programmes and results of the evaluation twelve months after.

METHODS

The study was carried out in the two biggest motor parks each in three cities located in south-western Nigeria, namely, Abeokuta, Ibadan and Osogbo, which are the capital cities of Ogun, Oyo and Osun States respectively. Geographically, Ibadan holds a central position among these cities. Abeokuta and Osogbo are both about 100 kilometres from Ibadan. The motor parks used were Kuto and Ita-Oshin motor parks in Abeokuta; Iwo Road and New Garage in Ibadan; Oju-Irin and Oke-Fia parks in Osogbo. All six parks are located within easy access to the town and along the routes they ply. They are a beehive of

activities and trading goes on till as late as 12 midnight. Three of the parks are purpose built and have a dwarf wall while the other three are open spaces, which have probably evolved over time. Generally the motor parks have extensive spaces with New Garage and Ita-Oshin being the largest (400m²) and Oju-Irin being the smallest (measuring about 100m²). Traffic in and around all the motor parks is heavy and contributes to congestion around the parks. The drivers' union pays tax to local government authorities for the use of their grounds.⁷

The study population was the YFH who trade in the motor parks. The hawkers sell by displaying their goods in a tray placed on their head. They call out or approach travellers to buy their wares. They hawk for very long hours, pausing only to eat or replenish their goods. Some hawkers sell from dawn (immediately passengers begin to arrive at the parks) to dusk.

From our interactions with the girls, three groups of hawkers could be identified. They are:

1. *Professional hawkers*: These girls own and manage their own business.
2. *Apprentice hawkers*: This group comprises young girls who are learning how to trade under the supervision of an instructor.
3. *Student hawkers*: These are girls who school during the day but hawk in the evenings when they return from school and on weekends. They hawk for their parents, guardians and instructors.

At baseline, attempts were made to identify and interview all the YFH in the six motor parks. The study enumerated all hawkers and identified 364 girls. However, not all were interviewed because hawkers are generally mobile. Also, some were students and as such were not regular on the trade. Thus, baseline interviews were conducted on 345 (94.5%) street hawkers. Nineteen (5.5 %) could not be reached.

To ensure full support for the study, the NURTW was approached and their permission and cooperation obtained. In addition, the women traders (who exist in groups such as food sellers, beer sellers and cooperative thrift and credit associations) were contacted, as some of the hawkers sell for their parents or instructors. Informed consent was obtained from the hawkers before data were collected.

Data Collection Instruments

The instrument for the baseline survey was developed following discussions with other researchers working on women's rights. Also, we reviewed literature^{1,3,8,10-12,16} and sought the contribution of health education experts. In addition, the suggestions of the hawkers were incorporated. A qualitative study consisting of focus group discussions and in-depth interview with leaders of the hawkers, female traders' association and drivers'

union was carried out. Results of the qualitative survey were analysed and used to develop the instruments for the quantitative survey. Key issues were framed into questions with the help of experts in the local language (Yoruba) and with contributions from some of the young girls. The instrument consisted of a semi-structured interviewer administered questionnaire, which comprised 55 questions. Responses to the questions were varied, in some questions respondents answered 'yes', 'no' or 'don't know' as appropriate, in others they chose the correct answer from a list of options, while some questions were open-ended. Responses were entered into the questionnaire by the research assistants. The questionnaire addressed the following issues: socio-demographic characteristics, reasons for hawking, awareness on issues relating to violence against women, personal experiences on VAW, prevalence of the different types of violence, determinants of violence in the motor parks, and suggestions for the intervention programme.

The questionnaire was pilot tested on 15 hawkers randomly selected from another motor park in Ibadan. After the pilot study, some questions were amended before data collection commenced.

The names of respondents were not recorded and they were reassured of confidentiality. The interviews were carried out in a quiet stall or office of the female traders ensuring that no one was within earshot. Baseline data were collected in April and May 2000.

Data Collection

The interviews were conducted by six trained research assistants and coordinated by three research supervisors. The research assistants were females aged between 18 and 25 years who had at least secondary school education. They had previous experience with data collection. They were trained on the use of questionnaires. In addition, they were educated on various aspects of VAW to enable them to understand respondents' answers. Training was conducted in Yoruba and English by the investigators over a period of two weeks. After the training, the research assistants were evaluated on efficiency and consistency of responses before they were allowed to commence data collection. They were retrained periodically during data collection to ensure consistency of responses. The supervisors had tertiary education and comprised two men and a woman aged between 30 and 40 years. Their duties were to register hawkers in each park, seek parents' consent, explain the purpose of the study to respondents, and to liaise with motor park officials.

Before the interventions began, advocacy visits were made to executives of the drivers' union, women traders' groups, the attorney-general and commissioner for justice, the police commissioner, police public relations officer, and the head of the Juvenile Welfare Department of each state.

The Intervention

The primary targets of the interventions were the YFH. Although the interventions were also directed at other target groups, quantitative data were not collected from them and, therefore, cannot be reported in the results. Thus, this paper only reports the primary targets. However, the secondary targets were the drivers and officers of the NURTW, female traders at the motor parks, police officers and judicial officers. Thus, the interventions took into consideration stakeholders who could put an end to violence within and outside the motor parks. For instance, the drivers are gatekeepers for access to the hawkers while the instructors are parents or guardians of the young women and as such must be aware of the risks they are exposed to in order to be able to protect them. The police and judicial officers as law enforcement agents were sensitised on the vulnerability of the girls to violence and the need to mete out punishment to perpetrators as a deterrent to other men. At the training sessions for hawkers, judicial officers explained the legal provision for sexually related offences in the Nigerian legal system.¹⁸ They also linked the hawkers with opportunities for free legal services if abused. These interventions were carried out over a five-month period, from April to August 2000. They were in three stages as follows:

Development and Distribution of IEC materials

Two educational materials were developed. The first was a handbill depicting the various forms of violence the girls are vulnerable to such as rape, unwanted touching of the breast and backside, and economic harassment. The second material was a poster that listed the different types of violence common in south-western Nigeria. The educational materials were developed after reviewing existing posters on VAW. They were adapted based on suggestions from the girls and results of the baseline survey and designed by a graphic artist. Two drafts were field tested before the final production. The hawkers distributed the posters to their friends at their lessons, in schools and at home. Over 1000 copies of the poster and handbill were distributed. The poster produced mainly for this study was used during the training sessions along with six others from UNIFEM, the Federal Ministry of Health and some NGOs.

Training Programmes

Six separate workshops were conducted for hawkers from the six motor parks, each spanning a period of three days. They were conducted in Yoruba, the native language and held in hotel halls or within the motor parks. A total of 595 hawkers attended the workshops ([Table 1](#)).

Topics covered during the training workshops include (a) definition, types and consequences of VAW; (b) HIV/AIDS, including prevention and methods of transmission; (c) results of the baseline survey and their implications; (d) developing assertiveness skills; (e) care and support for victims of violence — medical, legal and

economic; (f) setting up small-scale enterprises; and (g) opportunities available to continue education.

The training for secondary targets was for only one day. Each group was trained separately. Workshops for drivers and traders were held in the motor parks. Overall, six workshops each were held for traders and drivers and it involved all drivers and traders who work in each of the motor parks. The training was conducted in Yoruba.

A total of six training workshops should have been held for police and judicial officers, but only five were held because the Osun State Judiciary declined from participating. The programmes were held in hotel halls and conducted in English. Issues discussed include (a) definition, types and consequences of VAW; (b) HIV/AIDS, including prevention and methods of transmission; (c) results of the baseline survey and their implications; (d) developing assertiveness skills; (e) police perspectives of violence; (f) judicial perspectives on violence; and (g) how to prevent VAW individually and collectively.

Different training methods were used for the various target groups, namely, lectures, group exercises and presentations, questions and answers, stories, and case scenarios and songs (traders and hawkers). The training sessions were interactive and audience participatory. The participants were encouraged to talk, ask questions and relate experiences on cases of violence experienced (hawkers), handled (officers), or observed (traders and drivers) at the motor parks. They also shared experiences on how to avoid violence in the home and parks. The trainers comprised the investigators, resource persons from NGOs, senior police and judicial officers, proprietors of small scale enterprises (fashion designing, hair styling and catering), and an educationist. The latter two categories of trainers were not involved in the training programme for law enforcement officers. A total of 595 hawkers, 254 drivers, 212 traders, 65 police officers and 38 judicial officers participated in the training programmes.

Micro Credit Facilities for Hawkers

Micro credit facilities comprising a loan of \$20 (~~N~~2,000) each were given to professional and apprentice hawkers, while student hawkers received support for their education. This support included procurement of examination forms and textbooks, and payment of tuition and lesson fees. Selection of beneficiaries was based on the following criteria:

- (a) Identification by leaders of the traders' association as a hawker in the motor park.
- (b) Attendance at the training workshops for three days.
- (c) Consistent attendance at follow-up meetings.

(d) A referee, who must be a well known and responsible adult in the park.

The recipients arrived at a consensus that 10% of the total sum received, i.e., ~~N~~200, would be returned monthly, thus in ten months the total sum would have been remitted. They also agreed that repayment of loan would commence four months from the date the loan was received. The money was actually a grant but the agreement was made to encourage good investment and accountability. Hence, after three months of repayment the collection of monthly repayment was discontinued. The micro credit scheme was managed by the programme officer for each state with the assistance of the leader of the women traders in each garage. The programme officer kept a register of awardees, referees, places of residence, location of shop, goods sold, investment plans and terms of repayment. They also collected the monthly repayments and monitored how the girls used the money. The girls were taught financial management skills to help them utilise the loan effectively before commencing the scheme.

Evaluation of Impact

Evaluation was carried out 12 months after the interventions (August 2001). Three hundred and seventy four hawkers were interviewed at end line. The interviews were done by the research assistants who collected the baseline data after a one-week retraining programme. Indicators compared between baseline and end line were age; marital status; educational level; knowledge of physical and sexual violence; knowledge and consequences of violence; perceived vulnerability to violence; prevalence of different forms of violence particularly sexual harassment, attempted rape, rape and physical or psychological violence; and proportion who sought redress and where redress was sought. The micro credit scheme was evaluated six months after recipients received the loan. Evaluation was done using qualitative methods such as focus group discussions and in-depth interview. In addition, the programme officers observed the quantity of goods the girls had for sale.

Baseline and end line data were analysed using EPI-INFO statistical software packages by an independent observer, a statistician. The frequency of the distribution of the variables, chi-square and analysis of variance were done.

RESULTS

At baseline 345 hawkers were interviewed while at end line 374 were seen. Five hundred and ninety five hawkers participated in the training programme and 261 in the micro credit facilities. Time line of activities were as follows: baseline data collection was for 2 months, the interventions began immediately data collection ended and lasted 5 months, evaluation was done 12 months after the interventions. Comparison of the characteristics of baseline and end line respondents showed that the two groups consisted of different

respondents, some of the girls interviewed at baseline were also recruited during the intervention, however, the intervention consisted of many more new hawkers, most of whom were also interviewed at end line. It would have enriched the study to have a control group but this was not possible because of financial constraints. Analysis of the effect of the intervention between the different groups of hawkers could not be done as the categories were identified at the intervention stage.

Summary of Baseline Findings

The mean age of the subjects was 23.5 years. Majority (58.3%) of them were not married and 48% had received only primary education or none at all. The common violent acts experienced by the subjects were sexual harassment (36.3%), economic violence (27.5%), forced marriage (31.8%) and involuntary withdrawal from school (31.5%). More than half (59.1%) reported that they had been beaten or battered by men while about one third (30.4%) had been sexually abused; the main perpetrators of the abuse were drivers or bus conductors (44.8%) and friends (16.2%). These violent acts mostly occurred at the motor parks (47.6%) and at home (29.2%). About one quarter (26.3%) had experienced attempted rape, while 19 (5.5%) subjects had been raped. The perpetrators were spouses and boyfriends. Most (70.4%) of the oppressed women did not seek care or redress.¹³

Comparison of Baseline and End Line Results

There was no statistical difference ($p > 0.05$) in the socio-demographic characteristics such as age, education and marital status of the young women between baseline and end line. For example, the mean age was 23.5 years at baseline and 23.4 years at end line. At baseline 201 (58.3%) were single compared to 191 (51.1%) at end line. In terms of formal education, 10.5% (36) had no formal education, 37.4% (129) had primary education, compared to 10.2% (38) and 29.1% (109) respectively at end line. In both groups most (221 or 65.0% vs. 244 or 65.2%) of the hawkers had been hawking for between one and five years. However, there were differences ($p < 0.05$) in religion and persons who kept proceeds of the sales of the merchandise, suggesting that the groups were not entirely homogenous ([Table 1](#)).

Awareness and knowledge of various issues on violence improved between baseline and end line. Sexual violence was better appreciated. For example, unwanted touching of a woman's body was recognised as sexual violence by 274 (73.6%) hawkers at baseline compared to 310 (82.8%) at end line. Attempted rape was better recognised as violence at end line (322 or 86.1%) than at baseline (217 or 62.9%). Likewise, forced sexual intercourse was recognised as rape by 300 (86.9%) at baseline compared to 340 (90.9%) at end line. Knowledge of physical violence also improved. This was reported to include beating, hitting or battering by 199 hawkers (57.7%) before the interventions and 339 (90.6%) after the interventions. Economic forms of violence such as refusal to pay for

goods purchased, confiscation of wares and destruction of goods were mentioned by 100 (28.9%) hawkers pre-intervention and 259 (69.2%) post-intervention ([Figure 1](#)).

Psychological forms of violence such as constant disparagement improved from 15% to 38% at end line.

The respondents mentioned aches and pains (92.3%), injuries (91.9%), and death (81.8%) as the consequences of violence before and 88.2%, 86.4% and 86.7% after the interventions respectively. Responding to the question of who was to blame for the violent acts, 133 (38.5%) blamed women while 215 (62.5%) blamed the attacker at baseline. At end line 104 (28.0%) blamed women and 194 (64.5%) blamed the attacker. It was better recognised that violence may occur anywhere; the hawkers recognised that violent acts might occur at home (68.4%), at school (73.0%) and at work (71.8%) at baseline compared to 79%, 92.0% and 88.2% at end line ($p < 0.05$). The motor park was mentioned by 82.3% and 95.5% of the hawkers pre and post-intervention respectively. Three hundred and twenty respondents (92.8%) mentioned hawkers as possible subjects of violent acts at baseline and almost all 372 (99.4%) appreciated this fact at end line.

Respondents' opinions were sought on the most prevalent type of violence in the motor park, because some of the girls may deny or be embarrassed to tell the truth about their experiences. Some 36.3% mentioned sexual harassment or rape, 27.5% mentioned financial exploitation and 19.7% mentioned physical violence at baseline, while at end line 51.4%, 14.8% and 13.9% mentioned sexual harassment or rape, financial exploitation and physical violence respectively.

On personal experience at baseline, 105 (30.4%) hawkers had been sexually harassed; the perpetrators were drivers in almost half of the cases (47 or 44.8%) and followed by spouses in 16.2% (17) of cases. The motor park was the major (50 or 47.6%) place where these acts occurred. After the interventions, 59 (15.7%) had been sexually harassed ($p < 0.05$). The main perpetrators remained the drivers, 21 (53.8%). Ninety one girls (26.4%) claimed that a man had attempted to rape them, while 39 (11.3%) had experienced forced sexual intercourse with their partner or male friend at baseline. At end line, 23 (6.6%) had experienced attempted rape and 7 (1.9%) forced sexual intercourse. The difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Nineteen (5.5%) girls had been raped. The perpetrators were male friends or prospective husbands in 8 (42.1%) cases and most of these incidents occurred at home (15 or 78.9%). Only a case of rape was reported at end line ([Figure 2](#)).

Results on occurrence of physical violence revealed that at baseline more than half of the hawkers (204 or 59.1%) had been beaten or battered. The episodes of beating ranged from one to nine. Mean number of episodes was four. At follow-up, the range was from one to four, mean episode was two ($p < 0.05$). Experiences of psychological violence showed that thirty four (9.8%) hawkers had been belittled or relegated because they were females and 59 (17.1%) were denied freedom of movement by their spouses. At end line, 26

(6.9%) experienced relegation while 49 (13.2%) admitted restriction of movement by partners ($p < 0.05$). [Figure 2](#) shows the difference between baseline and end line results for rape, attempted rape, forced sexual intercourse and sexual harassment. ([Table 2](#))

Before the interventions, the common action taken after being violated sexually was to tell a friend (21 or 20.6%) while majority told nobody (57 or 54.2 %). After the interventions some sought help (45 or 76.3%) ($p < 0.05$) from the traders or drivers' association (18 or 30.6%). No one went to court or sought help from the police ([Table 3](#)).

On alternative occupations and micro credit facilities, at baseline many hawkers (340 or 98.5%) offered suggestions on alternative occupations to hawking. About half (51.6%) of them would like to be traders and have their own stalls, while 26.1% would like to go back to school or continue their schooling. Five (1.5%) did not know what else they could do apart from hawking ([Table 4](#)). During the interventions 261 hawkers benefited from the micro credit facilities, 125 (47.8%) received loans of \$20 each, while 136 (52.2%) received support with their education. The support included procurement of examination forms (31 or 22.8%), textbooks (71 or 52.2%) and payment of tuition fees (34 or 25%). Evaluation conducted six months after receiving the loan showed that all (39%) the young women interviewed said it boost their trade and gave them greater economic independence. The programme officers also found that most (30 or 75%) of the shops were better stocked after receiving the loans. All the student hawkers in their final year of schooling sat for the school leaving examinations (31 or 100%).

DISCUSSION

The socio-demographic characteristics of the young women did not change significantly between baseline and end line. The hawkers seen at follow-up were not exactly the same as those interviewed at baseline, however, some of those interviewed at baseline also participated at end line. This was because hawkers are generally very mobile and because of the itinerant nature of the work. Itinerant trading is the second major economic activity of women in West Africa and plays an important role in their countries' economy.⁶ The demographic profile also reflects the generally low educational status of Nigerian women.^{6,11,12,17} Young age, unmarried status and low educational level of most of the hawkers make them vulnerable to sexual exploitation by men.

Before the interventions the hawkers had limited knowledge of VAW, many had also been exposed to different forms of violence. However, following the interventions, knowledge of the various types of violence improved particularly the different forms of sexual violence. This is probably an outcome of the training workshops and distribution of IEC materials. The prevalence of violence experienced reduced at end line. This might be because the hawkers appreciated better their vulnerability to violence and, therefore, took more precautionary measures, asserted their rights and thus avoided violence. Modest

improvement was achieved in the number of girls that sought redress when abused and where redress was sought. The drivers and traders were more involved at end line when the hawkers sought redress. The law enforcement agents were probably not involved because there was no extremely serious incidence of violence, the period of evaluation was also short. A closer association between these agents and the hawkers may be necessary for the young girls to approach them for succour.

Economic empowerment of the hawkers complemented the success of the educational interventions, as some of the social and economic needs of the hawkers were met. The micro credit provided probably enabled the women to gain economic power and improve their self-esteem. Although the long-term benefits cannot be fully elicited yet, some of the older girls seized the opportunity to form associations from which they could obtain loans to expand their trade. It is recognised that micro credit can be a catalytic agent in increasing health knowledge among poor women in developing countries.¹⁹ We hope that the girls would be able to sustain the associations considering the young ages and limited accounting skills.

Educational support helped the student hawkers to realise the importance of schooling and to improve their academic opportunities. However, due to shortage of funds the project could not undertake schooling for hawkers who could not read or write but wished to improve themselves.

We did not achieve the desired changes in some areas of the study such as the reduction in prevalence of sexual violence. The drivers initially denied the occurrence of violence at the motor parks and their exploitation of the girls; they were occasionally antagonistic. However, the follow-up survey showed that they were the main perpetrators of violence. In addition to education on VAW, their sexual risk behaviour was addressed. Improvement in the knowledge and prevalence of some forms of violence such as physical, economic and psychological violence did not reach expected levels. This was because the girls were highly mobile and not all the participants at the baseline survey and intervention programme could be reached for interview. We suspect that the posters and handbills distributed increased the level of awareness on VAW and complemented the training programmes.

Although the prevalence of rape was reduced at end line, this result should be interpreted with some caution because rape is generally underreported due to the stigma attached to it in this environment.²⁰⁻²² This fact is exemplified by a research carried out among secondary school students in Zimbabwe where only 18% of sexually abused victims reported to anyone that they had been or were being sexually coerced.²¹ Thus, it is often difficult to quantify accurately how many young people suffer from violent acts. Women who have been raped may experience great difficulty in getting husbands; unfortunately care and support for them is also not readily available. Another explanation for the

underreporting of violence is that perpetrators of violence against young girls are often people closely related to them including spouses, neighbours, stepfathers, relatives and courtship partners, hence, victims are unable to speak out.²² The true situation in the park can be appreciated fully if re-evaluation is carried out after a longer time, as 12 months is rather short to appreciate the true situation of things. Presently our immediate concern is to sustain and improve upon the result achieved. The use of the mass media for public enlightenment and periodic advocacy to the drivers and their union are useful options.

We conclude that a multidisciplinary intervention targeted at the different groups and incorporating schemes aimed at empowering young women educationally and economically are effective strategies in ending gender-based violence.

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Figure 1 Knowledge of Types of Violence Before and After the Intervention

Figure 2 Experiences of the Different Forms of Sexual Violence

Table 1 **Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Hawkers**

Characteristic	Baseline n = 345	End line n = 374	P-value
<i>Mean age</i>	23.5 years	23.4 years	> 0.05
<i>Marital status</i>			
Single	201 (58.3)	191 (51.1)	4.71
Marricd	136 (39.4)	165 (44.1)	
Divorced/separated/cohabiting	8 (2.4)	16 (4.8)	
<i>Religion</i>			
Christianity	166 (48.1)	216 (57.8)	8.47
Islam	177 (51.3)	158 (42.2)	
Traditional religion	2 (0.6)	0 (0)	
<i>Education</i>			
None	36 (10.5)	38 (10.2)	4.97
Primary	129 (37.4)	106 (28.3)	
Some secondary	76 (22.0)	96 (25.7)	
Completed second/tertiary	104 (30.1)	114 (30.4)	
<i>Residence</i>			
Both parents	88 (25.6)	110 (29.4)	1.84
One parent	50 (14.5)	55 (14.7)	
Husband	126 (36.6)	134 (35.8)	
Family/friends	80 (22.4)	75 (20.0)	
<i>Earnings</i>			
Self	196 (57.0)	190 (50.8)	7.42
Parents/guardians	102 (29.6)	146 (39.0)	
Boss	46 (13.4)	38 (10.2)	

Table 2 Opinion on the Common Type of Violence Experienced by Hawkers

Violent act	Baseline Number (%)	End line Number (%)
Physical assault	68 (19.7)	52 (13.9)
Sexual harassment/rape	125 (36.3)	192 (51.4)
Economic (financial advantage)	95 (27.5)	55 (14.8)
Psychological/emotional	25 (7.2)	40 (10.6)
Road traffic accidents	15 (4.4)	5 (1.3)
Don't know	17 (4.9)	30 (8.0)
Total	345 (100)	374 (100)

$\chi^2 = 37.9$ $df = 5$ $p < 0.05$

Table 3 Number of Hawkers who Sought Redress Following Sexual Violence and Where

Redress sought	Baseline (N = 105)	End line (N = 59)	χ^2	P value
Friends	21 (20.6)	12 (20.3)	41.3	< 0.05
Parents/relatives	16 (15.2)	11 (18.6)	1.8	> 0.05
Traders/drivers union	8 (7.6)	18 (30.6)	25.9	< 0.05
Police/court	2 (1.6)	0 (0)	0.0	> 0.05
Others	1 (0.8)	4 (6.8)		
Did nothing	57 (54.2)	14 (23.7)	31.5	< 0.05

Others were religious leaders, teachers and guardians.

Table 4 Other Occupations Hawkers Would Embark Upon at Baseline

Occupation	No. (%)
Schooling	90 (26.1)
Trading	178 (51.6)
*Skilled vocations	56 (16.2)
Office work	16 (4.6)
Don't know	5 (1.5)
Total	345 (100)

**Skilled vocations include hairstyling, tailoring, catering, etc.*