

Working paper

# The Impact of Teaching Negotiation on Girls' Education and Health Outcomes

Innovations for Poverty Action - Zambia

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# **Negotiating a Better Future**

## **The Impact of Teaching Negotiation Skills on Girls' Education and Health Outcomes**

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### **Final Pilot Report**

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**Innovations for Poverty Action – Zambia**

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## 1. Introduction

The “Negotiating a Better Future” project was designed as the pilot phase of a study whose aim is to explore if and how a behavioral intervention with Zambian secondary school girls can improve their educational and health outcomes and, in the long term, contribute to the expansion of a healthy and skilled labor force that can support the country’s economic growth and development. In particular, the full study aims to test the specific value of three different components of youth empowerment programs, or treatments: social capital, information provision, and our unique curriculum on negotiation and communication skills. Given an existing pool of resources, we hypothesize that negotiation skills can lead to a more favorable allocation of resources to the girl, which will better allow her to develop her human capital and make decisions that protect her health. Outcomes of particular interest thus include the girls’ likelihood of attending and graduating from secondary school; household allocation of time (for school and studying) and resources (such as school fees and nutrition) for the girls; the girls’ rates of HIV, young motherhood, and risky behavior; and the girls’ sense of control in their lives and interpersonal relationships.

The pilot phase of the project proved successful, with resoundingly positive feedback from the participating girls, coaches, teachers, and school administrators. The program proceeded mostly as expected, although the timeline was extended slightly to suit the school schedule and to allow us to incorporate new behavioral outcome measures to proxy for longer-term behavior change within the pilot framework.

Our objective for the pilot was to determine the approximate impact of each treatment, and gauge the effect size of the negotiation treatment above and beyond the information treatment, in order to perform power calculations to inform the future full-scale intervention. We were able to get such estimates of potential effect size for certain key outcomes, like increased food consumption. The pilot was also an opportunity to fine-tune the program, finalize the research design, and test all protocols to ensure we are aware of all potential impacts on respondents, both positive and negative, so we can minimize unintended consequences and human subject risk during the full study. We have now thus developed a thoroughly tested and setting-appropriate set of measurement tools, including surveys and behavioral measures. The negotiation curriculum was similarly refined through workshops with the coaches that allowed us to design a new negotiation framework that enhances a girl’s ability to access resources while preserving ingrained cultural norms and social hierarchies. Finally, we were able to strengthen our relationship with the Zambian Ministry of Education and lay the groundwork for not just the full study implementation, but also an eventual country-wide roll-out of the best practices from our program.

Overall, our project findings indicate suggestive evidence that both the negotiation and the information programs are perceived positively by the girls, but that the negotiation sessions may increase a girl’s sense of control over her life and access to resources more than the information alone. Girls in the negotiation treatment reported less hunger, more control over their future life, and more positive conversations with people in their life. Currently, this evidence comes only from self-reported survey measures, and thus to truly be able to say there is a differential impact, we believe outcome measures that directly measure behavior may be required. Therefore, as part of an extended pilot follow-up process, we have been developing and pre-testing behavioral outcome measures that we have decided to implement in a third round of follow-up surveys with the participating girls and their households. Additionally, we are seeking to triangulate certain data with administrative records at the school. Both of these additional measures will be implemented pending approval from the Institutional Review Board, which is expected in early April. Analyzing these additional results will be beneficial to inform the future program and survey design, as we then seek funding for the implementation of the full study (engaging 1,000-3,000 girls) in May.

## 2. Summary of Activities

The pilot was scheduled to run from January through March 2012. Key activities included:

January	Refining of curriculum and coach training Finalization of survey instruments and training of enumerators Coordination with school for intervention Random assignment of girls to Information or Negotiation treatment Baseline survey conducted Two-week intervention begins on January 30 <sup>th</sup>
February	Intervention continues and concludes on February 11 <sup>th</sup> Baseline data entry, cleaning, and analysis Follow-up survey with participating girl begins on February 27 <sup>th</sup>
March	Follow-up survey with participating girl concludes March 2 <sup>nd</sup> Data entry, cleaning, and analysis Results analysis Development and pre-testing of new behavioral outcome measures School partnership development for full study
Ongoing	Preparation for final follow-up survey with behavioral measures Development of deeper collaboration with Ministry of Education

This project's timing was modified slightly from the original plan due to girls being slow in reporting to school for the new term, which necessitated delaying the start of the baseline survey, random assignment, and the intervention until the school rosters were more complete. Our desire to triangulate initial results with administrative data and additional behavioral outcome measures also changed the end-date of the pilot study, as we have extended the time frame to obtain IRB approval for additional follow-up with the participating girls and their households.

Grade 8 and 9 enrollment lists were provided by administrators at Mahatma Gandhi Basic School and a brief after-school meeting was arranged to inform all girl students in those grades about the upcoming program. At this time, the girls also made appointments for a 2-person survey team to visit them at their homes to explain the program to a parent or guardian, obtain consent for their participation in the program, and administer the baseline survey. The consent process involved a parental consent form, which was translated into the local language and read aloud to the parent, a participating girl assent form, and a sibling assent form.

In total, 131 girls were identified as eligible for the program. Several households were not found during the baseline survey period, due to incomplete or wrong addresses, not finding anyone at home, or recently having shifted or changed schools. 13 households that were reached did not consent to the girl participating in the program. Reasons included uncertainty about the program, not trusting the girl to actually attend, or that the girl was already too busy with activities or needed to do something at home. 101 households were ultimately surveyed.

Random assignment to the two treatment arms took the form of assigning the girls to the coach whose class they would be meeting with. The lottery occurred after-school, with assignment stratified across the seven Grade 8 and Grade 9 classrooms. All girls who were present in the designated classrooms drew an assignment, and upon confirmation of class

records, consent, and survey completion, 100 of these girls were deemed eligible to participate. Individual class size ranged from 15 – 18 girls, with an even split between the *Information Only* or the *Information and Negotiation* groups. 96 girls ultimately attended the program.

The after-school program was conducted over the course of two weeks, with 3 groups of the *Information Only* treatment meeting on alternate weekdays, and the 3 groups of the *Information & Negotiation* treatment meeting on the days the information group was not meeting. Both groups met for a total of 6 classes, with a final session on a Saturday. Three areas in the school hall were sectioned off by screens to hold the program, with the girls sitting on reed mats, usually in a circle or horseshoe-shape, with their two coaches.

Girls were provided with pens and notebooks to take notes, as well as a name tag that they wore during the session. Lunch, which included a sandwich or meat pie, drink, and piece of fruit, was provided each day at the beginning of the session. Sweets were at times distributed during sessions as prizes for games and activities. On the final day of the program, a lunch of chicken, chips, and ice cream was provided, and the girls were also given certificates and a completion gift. The gift was a small diary for the girl to use and a pencil case.

With the permission of Mahatma Gandhi administrators and parental notice, a follow-up survey with the participating girls was conducted after school over the course of a week. Surveys with 93 girls were completed in the survey time period. Results from this follow-up were analyzed and are described in Section 4.

New behavioral outcome measures were subsequently developed and pre-tested, and a plan for an additional follow-up survey was designed. Pending approval from the IRB, this additional follow-up will begin in April.

Additionally, refinement of the research design has been ongoing, as has outreach to the potential partner organizations and schools for the full-scale intervention. We have particularly focused on developing a deeper collaboration with the Zambian Ministry of Education, which issued a letter of support for the project on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. This has been facilitated by working closely with Remmy Mukonka, the Ministry's HIV/AIDS Coordinator and a specialist in HIV/AIDS education, from whom we regularly receive input and guidance. In January, we also presented the project to the Ministry's National HIV/AIDS Committee, a body which also provided valuable insight.

In March, we secured a meeting with the Ministry's Acting Permanent Secretary to inform her of the initial results of the project. She expressed great enthusiasm about the project, recognizing its potential to 1) support the current priority of expanding access to secondary education, which is currently very costly, time intensive, and difficult to implement across different geographical regions, and 2) be a motivating improvement to the country's recently revised life skills framework that is currently very inconsistently administered in schools, often because of lacking teacher interest or capacity. She was impressed by the scalability of the program and the sustainable impact it can have through its "training of trainers" component, as opposed to some one-time interventions that she has witnessed. We discussed future plans for both disseminating the research results and how our curriculum could be incorporated into the national curriculum.

### 3. Challenges Encountered

Despite the smooth progression of the pilot program, a number of manageable challenges were encountered. These included:

- Difficulties identifying all eligible girls in Grades 8 and 9, due to incomplete school enrollment records at the beginning of the new term, absenteeism, and having to locate girls after school.
- Difficulties finding households to obtain consent and administer the baseline survey, which led to several girls who wanted to participate in the program being unable to join.
- Location constraints. The hall where the program took place provided enough space, but the noise level was at times slightly disruptive, particularly when groups were doing energizers or ice-breakers or certain activities.
- Rain. As the program took place during the rainy season, the sound of the rain hitting did occasionally exacerbate the noise level. As the hall is a place where people sometimes congregate to wait out the rain, there was also some disruption when this occurred on a few occasions.
- Portions of the curriculum required lengthier explanations and successive reinforcement, which led to the teaching time lasting longer than anticipated.
- Other students and people at the school grounds were naturally interested in what this program was and came peeking in at times.

These challenges served as learning opportunities for how to refine the design, planning, and implementation of the full intervention.

### 4. Pilot Findings and Results

The participating girls seemed to enjoy both the *Information-Only* and *Information and Negotiation* program treatments; they gave resoundingly positive feedback regarding the program content, timing, and their coaches. Additionally, informal reports from teachers and parents indicate that they also appreciated the girls' participation.

Data from the baseline and follow-up surveys provide suggestive evidence of greater improvement in several key indicators for girls receiving the negotiation treatment. These girls report being more likely to talk to their parents about spending time on school and homework, as well as increases in nutritional intake measured by decreases in the number of meals skipped and days they felt hungry. Such short term improvements in education and health indicators are indicative of potential longer term educational and health improvements that foster economic growth. Additionally, girls who received the negotiation treatment reported feeling an increased sense of control over future decisions in their lives, indicating they may be less likely to be pressured into situations that put their education and health at risk. We do, however, also find a number of null results in other indicators, and areas where it is possible that the information group could have improved more. Key learning from the process for the full-scale intervention includes the need to triangulate data with administrative records from the school, to refine select survey questions, and to include behavioral measures to better proxy for longer term outcomes. We are implementing these

improvements in an extended follow-up with the participating girls and their households in April.

Qualitative follow-up discussions with the participating girls, meanwhile, provide potentially the most insight into the unique ways the program has impacted their lives. Key components of the negotiation skills curriculum have clearly resonated, including concepts such as “taking five,” which refers to managing one’s emotions during a discussion, and “stepping to their side,” which refers to taking time to understand the other person’s point of view. Girls have also made conscious changes in their lives, describing that they are spending less time playing and more time studying, that they have decided to stay away from boys, and that they are talking more nicely to their parents.

The following sub-sections address the pilot study’s findings and results in greater detail.

#### 4.1 Attendance

Program attendance was very steady throughout the two-week intervention. Of the 96 girls who attended the program, 93 attended at least five of their total six program days. 77 were able to attend every day of their program.

#### 4.2 Informal Program Feedback

On the last day of the program, we received some informal feedback from the participating girls through a debriefing session they had with their coaches. Feedback was very positive across both the *Information Only* and *Information and Negotiation* groups. Responses to a few key topics are highlighted:

##### What the girls liked

When asked what they liked about the program, girls alternately said the whole thing, or cited specific portions of the curriculum that they really enjoyed. Topics from each day of the information curriculum were mentioned, with the HIV/AIDS information seeming to particularly resonate, as well as the discussions about role models, benefits of education, and barriers to schooling. The four steps of negotiation, as well as key related concepts such as “step to their side” or “take five” were also well represented. Some specific comments from the two groups included:

##### Information Only Group

- *I liked every part of the program especially the participation time*
- *Staying away from sex because you can be infected with HIV/AIDS, stop accepting gifts from men and bad friends*
- *I liked to listen to the HIV topic ,health and being a good mother, I also liked to play with the other girls at the ground*
- *The things we learnt, the food we used to eat, and the playing part*
- *I liked coach Francine’s river of life. I was touched to hear her story. I also liked the information about what makes a girl happy*
- *Learn about how to protect ourselves from getting HIV how to stop older men from going out with us.*

##### Information and Negotiation Group:

- *HIV information , walking away where needed and the steps of negotiation*
- *The activities and step to other people side and negotiation*

- *How to negotiate and how to find my interests*
- *Brainstorm so that I can come up with many things*
- *Learning about how to negotiate, stating our interests, benefits of staying in school*
- *I liked the four steps ,ME, YOU ,TOGATHER, BUILD*

### How the girls plan to use what they have learned

When asked how they plan to use what they have learned, the participating girls responded with:

#### Information Only Group

- *I have learnt how to take care of myself as a girl, how to say no when an old man comes to give me presents*
- *I will use the skills I have learnt to educate and advise others on how to live their lives and to stay away from bad influence I*
- *Through coming to school every day and stop admiring things from others*
- *I will say no if someone or an older man wants to have sex with me, I will say no and I will report him to the police or my mum*
- *I will use it by always concentrating on school and never give up until I achieve my goals*
- *I will assist people with HIV/AIDS, I will abstain because I want to finish my school and become a better person in life*
- *Benefits of staying in school, I will go and ask my uncle for school fees*
- *What I liked the most is the skills, we learnt to share with my family and friends and how to take care of ourselves*

#### Information and Negotiation Group

- *Walking away where needed. Like if a sugar daddy is approaching me to have sex with him so that he can give me some gift.*
- *The negotiation skills if I have a problem with my family or friends*
- *Negotiation section: the four steps are ME, YOU, TOGATHER, BUILD, I have learnt to understand my own interests, choose good approach and brainstorming*
- *When I ask my siblings for something and then they refuse, I can step to their side and start asking questions*
- *I used them when I was telling my friend not to point fingers at her father*
- *Take 5 when your sisters or brothers do something bad*
- *I learnt about a lot of things that can make me happy , one of them is the HIV information because it made me improve more and more*
- *At home when I want some money for my school fees*

### General Program Feedback

The majority of the girls said the program was just right in length. None found that it was too long, although several did say they wished it could be longer.

When asked what name they would give to the program, most girls responded with some variation of "Girl Power," or "Helping Girls in Zambia." One girl said she would call it "my safety," and another simply said, "happiness."

### Coach Feedback

Six trained female Zambian coaches facilitated the after-school sessions with the girls, with 2 coaches working with each group. The coaches found that, while both curriculums were received with interest and engagement by the girls, the negotiation curriculum, in particular, required extensive explanation and often took longer than the allocated time. In addition, a few concepts seemed a bit too advanced for the girls to be able to master in such a short time. This feedback will allow us to refine and simplify the curriculum before the full implementation.

The time allocated for playing games with the *Information Only* group seemed to improve that group's level of closeness to and openness with the coaches. Coaches expressed that the girls in the *Information Only* group seemed to feel freer to share with them, and that they participated more actively in the discussions. The *Information and Negotiation* sessions, meanwhile, felt more like classroom learning because girls had to concentrate harder to understand. We will aim to equalize this balance between the two groups in subsequent programs, although currently no large effects from this difference have been detected.

A representative comment from the coaches regarding the *Information Only* groups is:

*The girls fully participated; they seemed very interested and displayed a high level of understanding. Especially during time for sports, they used to get excited and looking forward to it.*

For the *Information and Negotiation* sessions, meanwhile, the coaches found:

*It was equally successful though they seemed tired due to the bulkiness of the curriculum. However, they participated well; the hand-motion was very helpful. They grasped the key points well.*

### 4.3 Key Baseline Findings

The baseline survey revealed the following key points:

- Girls reported financial difficulties, sometimes translating into food insecurity, with 22% reporting not having enough to eat
- This resulted in them also worrying about future education, with 47.5% reporting tuition/fees as a potential obstacle to finishing their schooling
- They do not report having a great deal of house work, or this taking away from schooling
- It is difficult to get them to accurately assess their school attendance, with missed days of school rarely, if ever, being reported, despite teachers telling us absenteeism is high
- Similarly, it is difficult to get girls to accurately report risky behavior they engage in, including boyfriends, drinking, and other high-risk activities

These results underscore the importance of using the survey as only one of several tools for understanding the impacts of the program, since self-reported data may be limited in some ways.

### 4.4 Key Outcome Findings

Given that this is currently a small-scale pilot, our sample size was not large enough to allow us to deem improvements in results as statistically significant, even though there were some improvements between baseline and follow-up results. There is suggestive evidence of

greater improvement in negotiation on some key things, but there are also a number of null results and areas where the information group could have improved more. Thus, while the pilot suggests greater improvement in negotiation treatment, the exact size and likely long-term impacts of these effects are inconclusive without behavioral measures. Below we describe details illustrated in Table 1: Key Outcome Measures.

**Table 1: Key Outcome Measures**

	Info Baseline	Negotiation Baseline	Info change	Negotiation change	Diff-in-diff
Talk to Parents About HW	0.043	0.067	-0.022	+0.044	+0.066
Meals Skipped	0.478	0.378	+0.174	-0.156	-0.329
Days w/ Not Enough to Eat	2.000	2.077	+0.182	-0.577	-0.759
<b>Who has control over how much food I have to eat?</b>					
<i>Myself Only</i>	0.500	0.533	+0.065	+0.156	+0.090
<i>Myself + someone/ something else</i>	0.239	0.222	-0.130	-0.111	+0.019
<i>Someone/ something else only</i>	0.261	0.244	+0.065	-0.044	-0.110
<b>Who has control over what happens to me in future?</b>					
<i>Myself Only</i>	0.283	0.356	+0.130	+0.222	+0.092
<i>Myself + someone/ something else</i>	0.565	0.556	-0.196	-0.289	-0.093
<i>Someone/ something else only</i>	0.152	0.089	+0.065	+0.067	+0.001
<b>Who has control over when I get married?</b>					
<i>Myself Only</i>	0.413	0.556	+0.152	+0.000	-0.152
<i>Myself + someone/ something else</i>	0.413	0.200	-0.109	+0.067	+0.175
<i>Someone/ something else only</i>	0.174	0.244	-0.043	-0.067	-0.023
<b>I am someone who prefers to let others have their way (1 = disagree, 4= agree)</b>	2.804	2.756	-0.196	-0.178	+0.018
<b>When you have disagreements with your family, do you (0=give in; 1=compromise; 2=get my way)</b>	0.652	0.533	+0.087	+0.044	-0.043
<b>When you have disagreements with your friends, do you (0=give in; 1=compromise; 2=get my way)</b>	0.891	0.800	+0.000	+0.156	+0.156
<b>Does OUTSPOKEN describe you? (0=no, 1=yes)</b>	0.565	0.422	+0.109	+0.044	-0.064

#### 4.4.1 School and Homework

We found suggestive evidence that girls were more likely to talk to their parents about being able to spend more time doing homework after undergoing the negotiation treatment (a 67% increase from a coefficient of 0.067 to 0.111), but the same trend was not observed for girls in the information treatment (a 50% decrease from 0.043 to 0.022). In the full study, it will be helpful to triangulate data from parental surveys, administrative records, and teacher interview reports to verify the girls' survey responses. It will also likely be helpful to add a midline data collection period after a school fee payment or examination cycle, since guardian-child negotiations over key schooling expenditures only happen at certain, specific times. For this pilot, gathering administrative records on school attendance directly from the school will help us estimate the potential impact in this area, in a more reliable fashion.

#### 4.4.2 Nutrition

We found that the number of meals skipped decreased for girls in the negotiation treatment by 41%, and increased for girls in the information treatment by 36%. Girls in the negotiation treatment report fewer days with not enough to eat (-0.5 days), while girls in the information treatment report more days without enough food (+0.18 days). Further, after the program, girls in the negotiation treatment report having more control over how much food they receive (a 29% increase in “myself only” having control over how much to eat) and there is an 18% decrease in this group of the likelihood that girls believe “someone/something else only” has control over how much they have to eat. To a smaller degree, girls in the information-only treatment also report more control over “myself only” controlling how much she has to eat (13% increase), but they also report more often that “someone/ something else only” has control over food they receive (a 25% increase). There is a strong need therefore for sibling and parent surveys, at baseline, midline, and follow up, to know where these additional meals that negotiation girls are getting are coming from.

#### 4.4.3 Locus of Control

When asked “Who has control over what happens to me in future?”, girls in both the negotiation and information treatments reported more frequently that they alone had control after participation in their respective programs, at increased rates of 63% and 46%, respectively.

#### 4.4.4 Early Marriage and Dating

When asked “Who has control over when I get married?” the *Information & Negotiation* group did not report significant changes in “myself only” answers. However, a higher percentage of the *Information & Negotiation* group than the *Information-Only* group reported they believe that their timing of marriage is in their hands entirely, rather than entirely in someone else's, at 56% of the negotiation group and 41% of the information group. Further, girls in the *Information & Negotiation* group reported less in the follow up survey that “someone/ something else only” had control, and more that “Myself + someone/ something else” had control.

Data revealed very little response and variation in questions regarding boyfriends, dating, alcohol, and related topics, leading researchers to believe we need to revise these questions and the way they are asked. This may be an important area to perform qualitative follow-ups, as girls appear to exhibit more honesty the more trust is built up.

#### 4.4.5 General Skills/Attitudes

Girls in the *Information & Negotiation* group self-report more persuasive personalities, and that they are better able to get what they want. Both *Information-Only* and *Information & Negotiation* group participants are less likely to let others get their way after the treatments. Interestingly, there is a greater increase for the *Information-Only* group in girls who report being more outspoken (19% vs 11%), – but this could be resulting from coaches de-emphasizing being outspoken in the Negotiation curriculum, and instead teaching how girls can get their way through personable means that strengthen relationships.

#### 4.4.6 Areas with null results

In some areas, there was no difference between the *Information-Only* and *Information & Negotiation* groups, despite a hypothesized change. This includes little change in reported risk-taking behavior, since this may not have been accurate at baseline, little change in

schooling ambitions (which, again, may be skewed at baseline due to self-reports), little relevant change on time allocation (and small increase on time spent on homework from the *Information-Only* group), and little change in self-perception of disagreements.

#### 4.4.7 Understanding of HIV/AIDS Risk and Prevention

After the program, the majority of girls in both the *Information-Only* and *Information & Negotiation* groups were able to correctly identify the three bodily fluids through which HIV can be transmitted and three bodily fluids through which it cannot be transmitted.

Additionally, girls were able to identify things that they had learned in the program which would help them protect themselves from becoming infected, such as:

- We should not have multiple partners
- Staying away from sex; using condom
- No sex before marriage; knowing the status of my future partner
- Before having sex, go for VCT, and no having multiple partners; use condoms
- Not having sugar daddies; not having sex
- To abstain; say no old men immediately
- What I have learned on HIV/AIDS will help me to sensitize people in my community

One girl in the *Information & Negotiation* group incorporated a topic from her negotiation lessons into her response, citing, "I learned that I must say a firm NO when a man wants to sleep with me."

#### 4.4.8 School and Life Decisions

Over the short time period of the pilot, we were unable to measure longer-term changes on school attainment. However, the participating girls did self-report that they had learned things in the program that would help them stay in school.

For the *Information-Only* group, these included:

- Never give up with school, no matter what problems you have. Fight hard for your future.
- By not following what your friends are doing.
- By overcoming barriers by being confident in herself
- Not listening to the criticism of others trying to discourage you from school
- To study hard and avoid group influence

Girls in the *Information & Negotiation* group had similar responses, although two cited negotiation skills that would help them as well.

- To work hard at school and study
- To avoid having bad friends
- I should finish school so that I become a better mother in future
- Protecting one's self from getting pregnant.
- I should not get pressure from peer pressure and I should concentrate on my studies
- Stepping to their side
- Negotiation, like if I don't have money for school fees, I would negotiate with the Headmistress to stay in school

Girls in the *Information & Negotiation* group also reported that they planned to study harder, and spend less time on frivolous things.

#### 4.4.9 Understanding of Negotiation Concepts

The *Information & Negotiation* group clearly gained understanding of the key negotiation concepts they were taught. Almost all girls in this group defined negotiation with phrases from the curriculum, including primarily “talking to solve problems,” and “when two people seem to want different things and yet they want to work together.” Almost all girls in this group were able to list the four steps of negotiation; some were unable to remember or explain the details, whereas others had strong explanations.

Understanding of more complex concepts, such as positions and interests, win-win solutions, roadblocks, and walking away was also fairly strong in the Negotiation group, although many girls did not seem to have entirely captured certain nuances.

Spillovers between groups appeared to be limited. The *Information-Only* group did not generally exhibit knowledge of concepts that were only taught in the negotiation treatment. A select few *Information-Only* participants had knowledge of the most basic catchphrases used in the negotiation curriculum, such as that negotiation is “talking to solve problems,” or that the four steps of negotiation are “Me, You, Together, Build.” Deeper understanding of the concepts was, however, clearly missing. As one *Information-Only* participant explains about the four steps, “I didn’t learn about it, but I read from my cousin’s book... I cannot describe them.”

#### 4.4.10 Application of Negotiation Skills

Girls reported applying negotiation skills in interesting ways, revealing they were understanding the program more deeply as opposed to thinking of it simply in terms of getting their way. For example, they emphasized listening to others, staying calm in discussions, being helpful to others, and having conversations about difficult topics. In one powerful example, a girl described how when she broke a dish, she would have earlier hidden this from her aunt, but decided to tell the truth instead, and was surprised that her aunt understood. The overall impact of these conversations is unclear, and thus it will be helpful to measure behaviorally whether these improved communications skills result in the girls gaining more resources within the household. One worry that was explicitly outlined in the consent form was the possibility that adults and others in the girl’s life may not respond positively to her increased empowerment. However, girls actually report their families being happy that they received the negotiation training, and feeling they were easier to get along with now.

#### 4.4.11 Qualitative Outcomes

Qualitative follow-up discussions with the participating girls provide potentially the most insight into the unique ways the program has impacted their lives.

Through these qualitative discussions, we learned that one important difference between the negotiation treatment and the informational treatment was that girls in the negotiation treatment made specific plans to change their own lives based on the information, whereas

girls in the informational treatment saw what they had learned as facts (perhaps not applicable to them) to be passed on to others.

For example, some girls receiving only the information treatment reported:

*Have had plans of being a good girl and teaching my fellow girls about what I learnt because I want my friends also know what I learnt so that maybe some of them might also change in their doing of things.*

*I spoke with a young boy who happened to be my neighbor likes stealing. I talked to him nicely about his bad reputation and took him with me to church so am just hoping he changes his behavior.*

Meanwhile, girls in the negotiation treatment shared:

*I am excited because of the goals I want to achieve in future. Before the training I never had set goals of wanting to become a doctor but now am so excited because I know I will do it. Am so worried about my family especially that my mum is a widow and does not work, so I don't know how she is managing paying school fees for my elder sister and what they eat. Though I know it will take time, I will make sure that I get educated and take care of my family which can only happen if I achieve my goal of being educated.*

*I feel changed, I feel great about myself too. I feel confident after the training. The new feeling was, I felt on top of the world. I did make a plan in the area of being respectful when talking to elderly people. I have told myself that I will be waiting for elders to finish saying what they want to tell me before I say anything. I also had a conflict with my sisters over the issue of cooking. I did not want to cook, so she just started shouting at me, I did not answer back. I waited for her to finish saying whatever she wanted to say, she understood and our relationship did not go sour.*

In both treatments, the pilot uncovered that girls found the best way to avoid sexual risks was to avoid being around boys entirely:

*I have changed tremendously like I have already said, before I would accommodate boys to an extent of having an intimate relationship but after the training I have realized that it is bad so I do not do that anymore, I do not see any boy or go near them.*

*Before training I used to mingle a lot with boys in my neighborhood but after the training I have stopped because I realized how far and beyond such kind of relationships could go meaning they could go into intimacy which I feel am not ready for.*

Girls in the negotiation treatment certainly improved their inter-personal communication skills, but they also seemed to work to improve their behavior overall, potentially laying the groundwork for improved inter-personal relationships:

*The relationship with my grandmother has changed because I now do a lot of house chores unlike before, I also have fewer friends.*

*Before my parents used to look at me as a naughty child who is ever playing around but now they say am a good girl because I even study a lot. They also say if I continue like that I will be able to pass my exams.*

*There has been an improvement with the way we are now communicating with my parents especially when it comes to house chores. Am able to reason even when I know I wouldn't do it at least I try at all means to do what my parents tell me to do. My parents tell me that am now a good person because of the change they see in me following the training and they have said they wish it continues.*

These responses illustrated the importance of this piloting and development period, which allowed us to develop a negotiation curriculum that was able to create profound change in girls' lives without disrupting the social fabric or cultural norms. Girls were able to improve their wellbeing while simultaneously improving their relationships with others.

One way of doing this, that we will aim to specifically test in the full study, appears to be by overcoming accumulated mistrust that may have allowed both parties to mistreat the other. For example:

*I think my relationship with my aunty has improved because I now understand that it is because she wants the best out of me that's why she treats me the way she does sometimes. Before I used to be very rude to her because I thought she mistreated me but as for this time I give her respect. Before my aunt used to beat me a lot and I always said bad words back to her. I can give an example it's only the other day when I broke a plate so I waited for her to return so I could explain what happened so that she understands, so after I talked to her that it was an accident surprisingly she was okay with it but before I could have hidden the broken plate and she could have beaten me.*

Here are some additional sample responses of the impact the negotiation training has had in select girls' lives:

*I made plans....eg I can't drop out of school now because even if am chased from school due to non-payments of fees I feel I would negotiate with my parents by telling them to go and talk with school management about paying in installments and them to explain the delay in payments.*

*In school before the training I used to hate some teachers who likes punishing me for whatever reasons and ended up not writing work given but now I realized that I wasn't worth it coz if anything am the one who was losing out. So these days I understood that if am punished genuinely it is because the teachers want the best out of me.*

*My sisters. I now don't get upset when they do not want to give me something; instead I talk to them in a nice way.*

*Yes, when I ask for something from my sister and she does not want to give me, I will just step to her side, that's by telling her good things, and then she changes her mind and gives it to me. That has changed my relationship with her.*

*There was a guy who wanted to be touching me when we were studying for a test, so I told him to stop disturbing me, he did not reply, he was just upset with me so I just decided to walk away.*

*Have made plans by choosing what type of friends I should be hanging out with. It is just today here at school that I approached this girl who likes wearing make-up and having boyfriends. I was advising her about the consequences she might find herself in considering*

*her behavior. She became very angry with me until we sat down and I explained nicely how doing such things could destroy her future if she wasn't careful.*

## 5. End Products of Pilot Phase

The key substantive end products of the pilot phase include:

- A Negotiation curriculum specifically designed for the Zambian setting, including an innovative new "Me, You, Together, Build" framework. This framework can be used for other negotiation programs in cultures where strong relationships are paramount and there are strong social hierarchies based on age and gender.
- An Information curriculum also customized for the Zambian setting that provides targeted, actionable information to complement the negotiation curriculum
- 7 coaches with in-depth training and experience teaching this curriculum, who can be called on to help train additional coaches for the full-scale intervention
- A fully tested and setting-appropriate set of evaluation instruments, including surveys and behavioral measures
- Program implementation for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls at Mahatma Gandhi Basic School
- Estimates of potential effect size for certain key outcomes, like increased food consumption, which allowed us to perform power calculations to inform the research design of the future full-scale intervention
- Development of a deeper relationship with the Zambian Ministry of Education, with the groundwork laid for collaboration on the full study implementation, but also for an eventual country-wide roll-out of the best practices from our program
- Development of relationships with additional schools for the full scale intervention

## 6. Analysis and Recommendations

Overall, the *Negotiating a Better Future* program was deemed to be exciting and helpful by the attendees, and both the information-only and negotiation treatments appear to have generated positive effects. There is additional suggestive evidence that the negotiation skills enabled girls from that group to access more food and more successfully manage difficult conversations in their lives. There are also some areas where the treatment had no effect, or an inconclusive effect, and a few outcomes where the *Information-Only* group showed more improvement than the *Information & Negotiation* group, potentially due to the game-playing aspect of the *Information-Only* group contributing toward self-esteem and positive feelings, and potentially due to the girls who received the negotiation training using the skills to improve relationships in their lives, which will not have immediate effects, but rather longer term impacts.

We have referenced the self-reported nature of many survey measures and are taking measures to triangulate this data with administrative records and behavioral measures in an extended follow-up process. We feel this extended follow-up stage of the pilot will be enable us to still more accurately measure the project's overall impact, and will allow us to make final adjustments to the research design and implementation plan as we prepare for the full scale study.

On the basis of these pilot results and refinement of research design, and with the benefit of a longer timeframe over which to track results, the full scale study will enable us to identify the impact of teaching negotiation skills on girls' education and health outcomes, over and

above the impact of traditional informational programming. The statistical significance of our results will have far-reaching policy implications for national life skills education policy in Zambia, and for development interventions targeting girls' education and improved health around the world.

## **7. Contact Information**

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