



**International Initiative for Impact Evaluation**

# **Evidence Gaps and Synthesis of Evidence of Group Based Livelihoods Programs**

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# What do we know and not know about group-based livelihood programs? A synthesis of recent evidence

## Debate

- Groups may be able more effective in access livelihood assets such as finance, trainings, other support programs
- Reduction in costs
- Improved targeting
- Public action
- Groups are exclusionary
- Emprical evidence is mixed

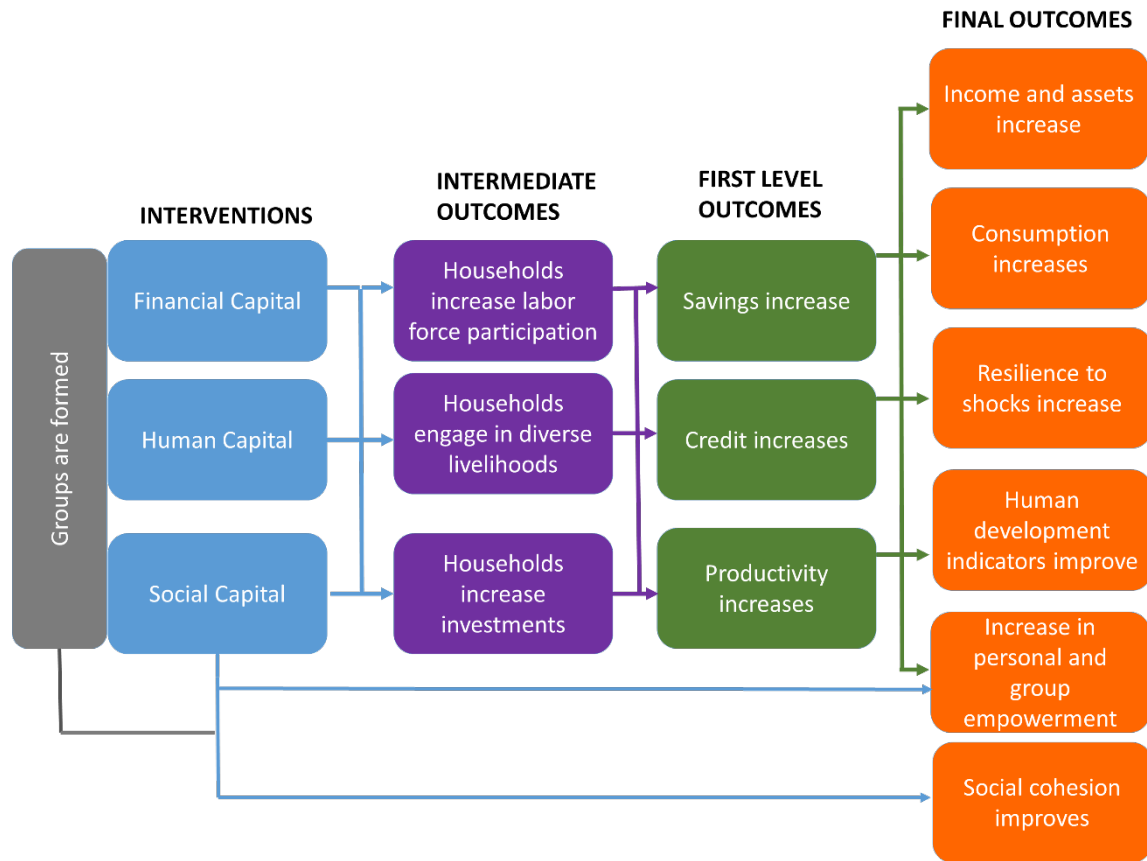
## Main Questions

- What is the effect of group-based livelihoods interventions on final outcomes such as income, consumption, vulnerability and social cohesion?
- Do group-based livelihoods interventions lead to more savings, debt, investment in productive activities, livelihoods diversification and labor force participation?
- What contextual and programmatic factors related to these interventions led to impacts or lack thereof?

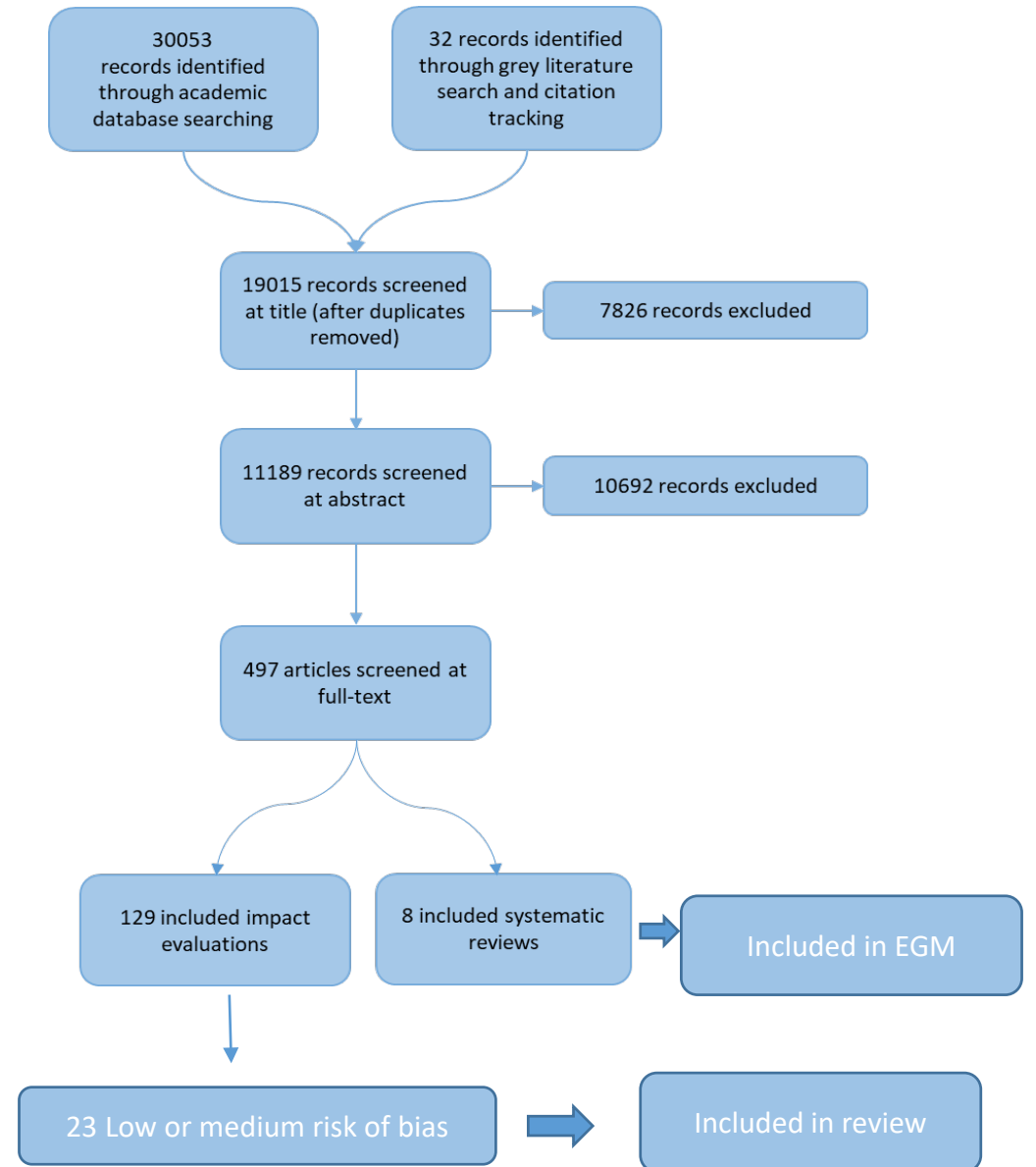
## Scope of the review

- Group based livelihoods program (GBLPs) that provide access to and use of
- Financial capital (internal and external) : Examples, credit, grants, savings
- Human capital: Examples, trainings for enterprises, productivity enhancement
- Social capital: Examples, linkages with institutions and community
- Combination of these
- Example of programs included: SHGs in India, group MFIs in Bangladesh, VSLAs in Africa, SHGs and youth groups by NGOs for livelihoods development.

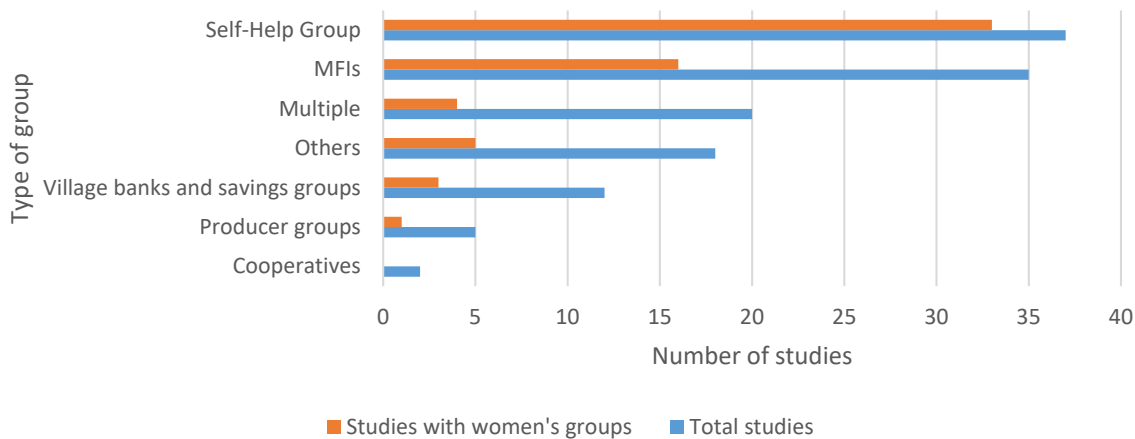
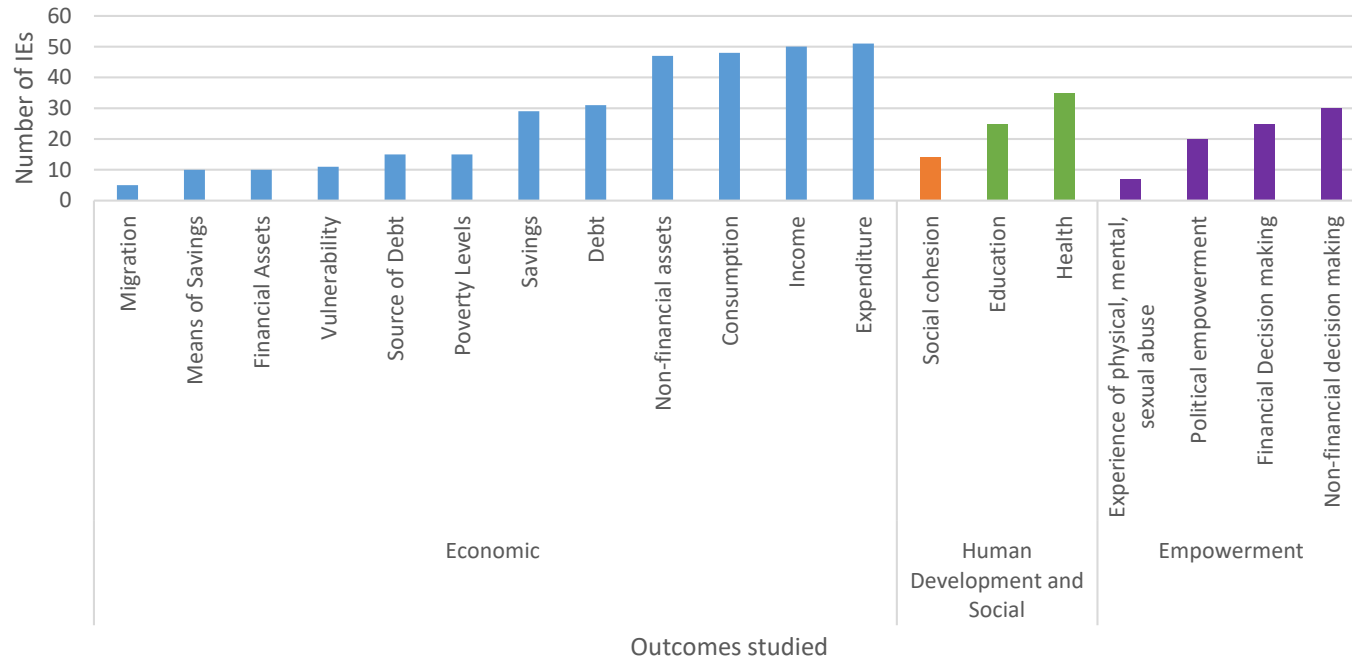
# A (very) simple Theory of Change



# PRISMA Diagram



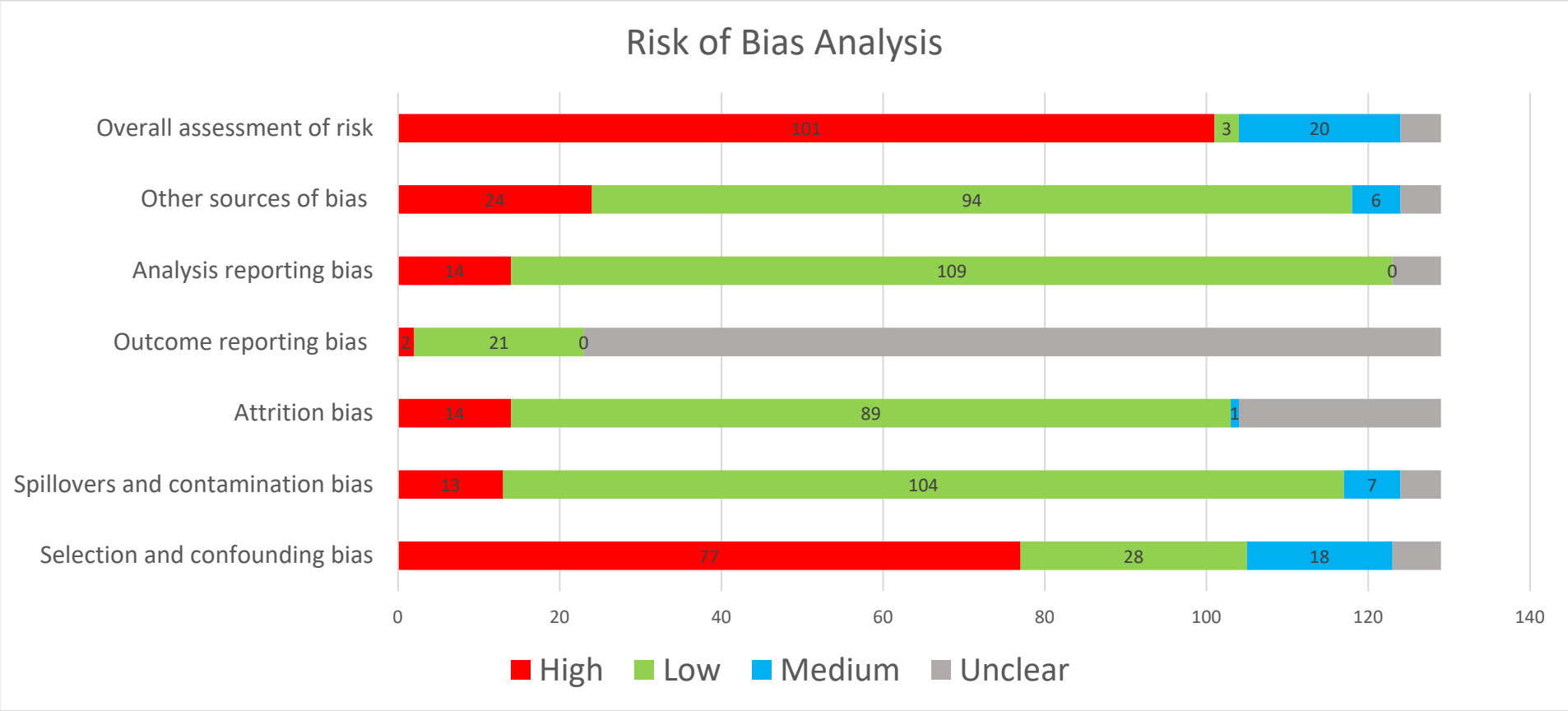
# Evidence Gaps



# Main Findings of the EGM

- Financial programs are the bulk of evidence (micro-credit etc.)
- Economic outcomes certainly form the bulk of outcomes studied. These outcomes have been studied at the household level; few analyses of individual impacts (and particularly women) are available
- Social cohesion outcomes need more examination.
- A quarter of the impact evaluations assess impacts on engagement in economic activities, diversification of livelihoods (including enterprises) and productivity.

- 23 studies were found to be low and medium risk of bias and included in the review to draw findings



## Findings from Meta-Analysis of Low Risk of Bias Studies

	Effect	Overall			Dropping outliers			RCTs		
		SMD/RR	Lower CI	Upper CI	ES	Lower CI	Upper CI	ES	Lower CI	Upper CI
Income	SMD	0.08	-0.004	0.087	0.022	-0.016	0.061	0.092	-0.004	0.188
Consumption	SMD	0.072	0.015	0.129	0.031	-0.002	0.065	0.085	0.012	0.158
Savings	SMD	0.121	0.012	0.23	0.044	0.02	0.068	0.121	0.012	0.23
Livelihood activities	RR	1.264	1.092	1.436	1.05	0.971	1.129	1.264	1.092	1.436
Loans	SMD	0.046	-0.002	0.093	0.031	-0.014	0.075	0.049	-0.007	0.106
Assets	SMD	0.027	-0.013	0.067	0.027	-0.013	0.067	0.027	-0.013	0.067

## Correlation between Program characteristics and Outcomes

	Income	Loans	Consumption	Savings	Livelihoods diversification
Uptake of the programme	0.8195*	0.2728	0.5484	0.8003*	0.8560*
Length of exposure to programme	-0.4174	-0.6861*	-0.2813	-0.4191	-0.3139
Women only groups	0.4135	-0.1126	0.2325	0.3312	0.9752*
Vulnerable context	0.4135	0.1237	0.2803	0.2931	0.4755
Financial plus human or social capital	0.0921	0.0977	0.2259	0.5847	0.9752*
Number of studies	6	7	7	6	5

# Findings from qualitative synthesis

- Improved food security in times of increased economic stress
- Improved social cohesion measured by access to group and community support and access to public institutions
- Too few studies on labor force participation to analyse
- Take-up is positively correlated with how effective a program is
- Longer term programs are not necessarily more effective.
- Trainings and linkages to other social programs help improve the impact of credit and financial interventions.
- We find that SHG programs seem to benefit the poor, the vulnerable and the landless.