

# Impact of an Integrated Intervention (SAFE) on Spousal Violence against Women and Girls in Slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum  
Stellenbosch, Cape Town  
16 September, 2015



# Background

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- Although intimate partner violence (IPV) is a common health, development and human rights issue worldwide evidence is still inadequate on what works in addressing IPV
- Some interventions in Africa showed promise in reducing IPV at the individual level. However, there is no guidance on how to reduce IPV at the community level
- Interventions addressing violence against women & girls (VAWG) often siloed and vertical
- To address these gaps, an integrated intervention was developed for Dhaka slums and tested using RCT

# The context

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- In Bangladesh, 53% of ever-married reproductive aged women report spousal physical and/or sexual violence (BDHS, 2007)
- 32% of currently married women report being economically abused by spouse (BBS, 2013)
- The rate of physical and/or sexual violence is higher in urban slums (66%) than in urban non-slum areas (45%) (UHS, 2006)
- Young females are more vulnerable to IPV (Naved & Persson, 2005)

# Growing up safe & healthy (SAFE): The intervention

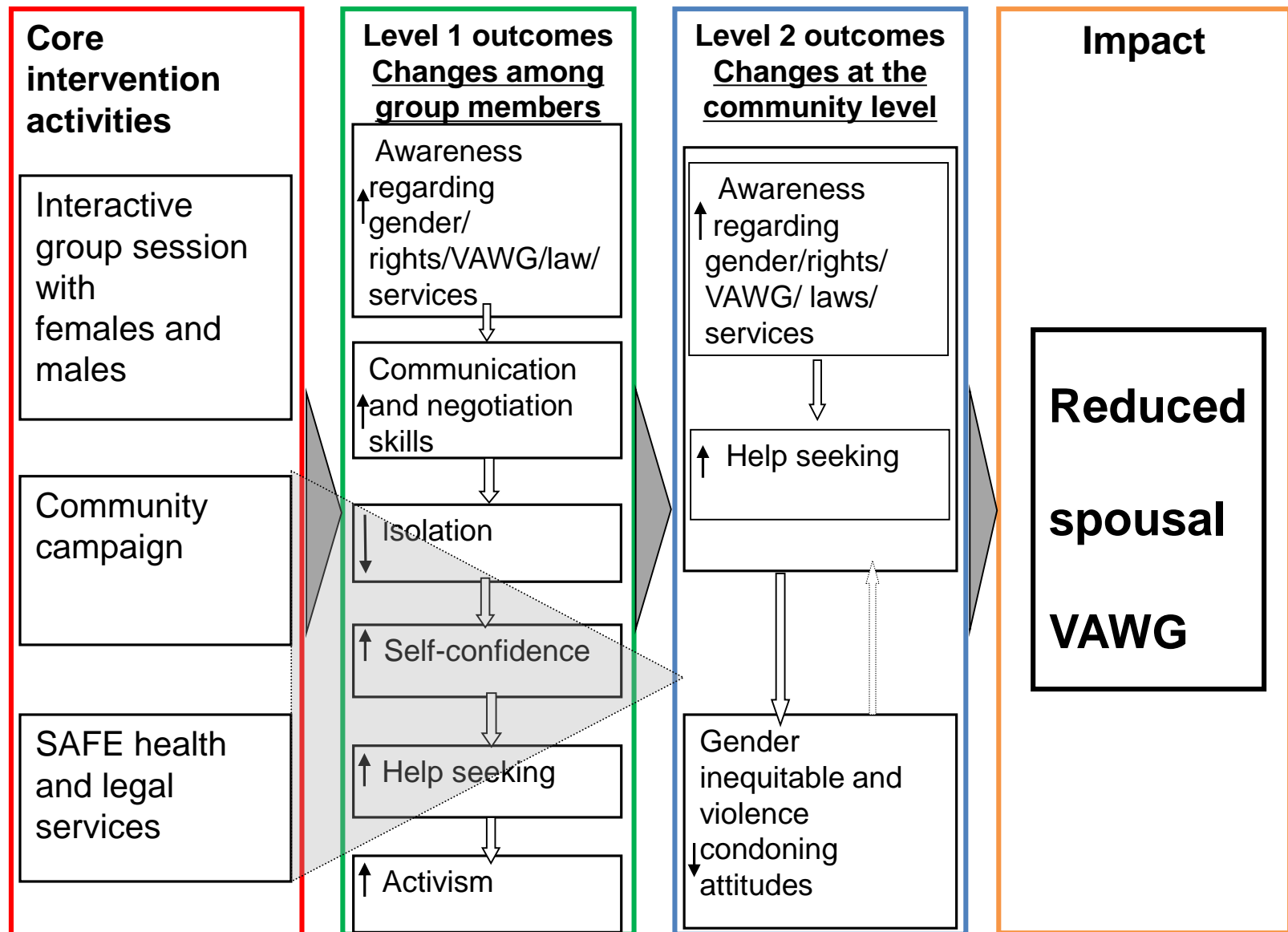


SAFE is an integrated multi-sectoral, multi-tier, multi-partner intervention addressing sexual & reproductive health & rights & VAWG in Dhaka slums.

Project partners:

- icddr,b (lead)
- Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)
- Marie Stopes Clinic Society
- Nari Maitree (We Can Alliance)
- Population Council

# SAFE's theory of change





## Study site and target group

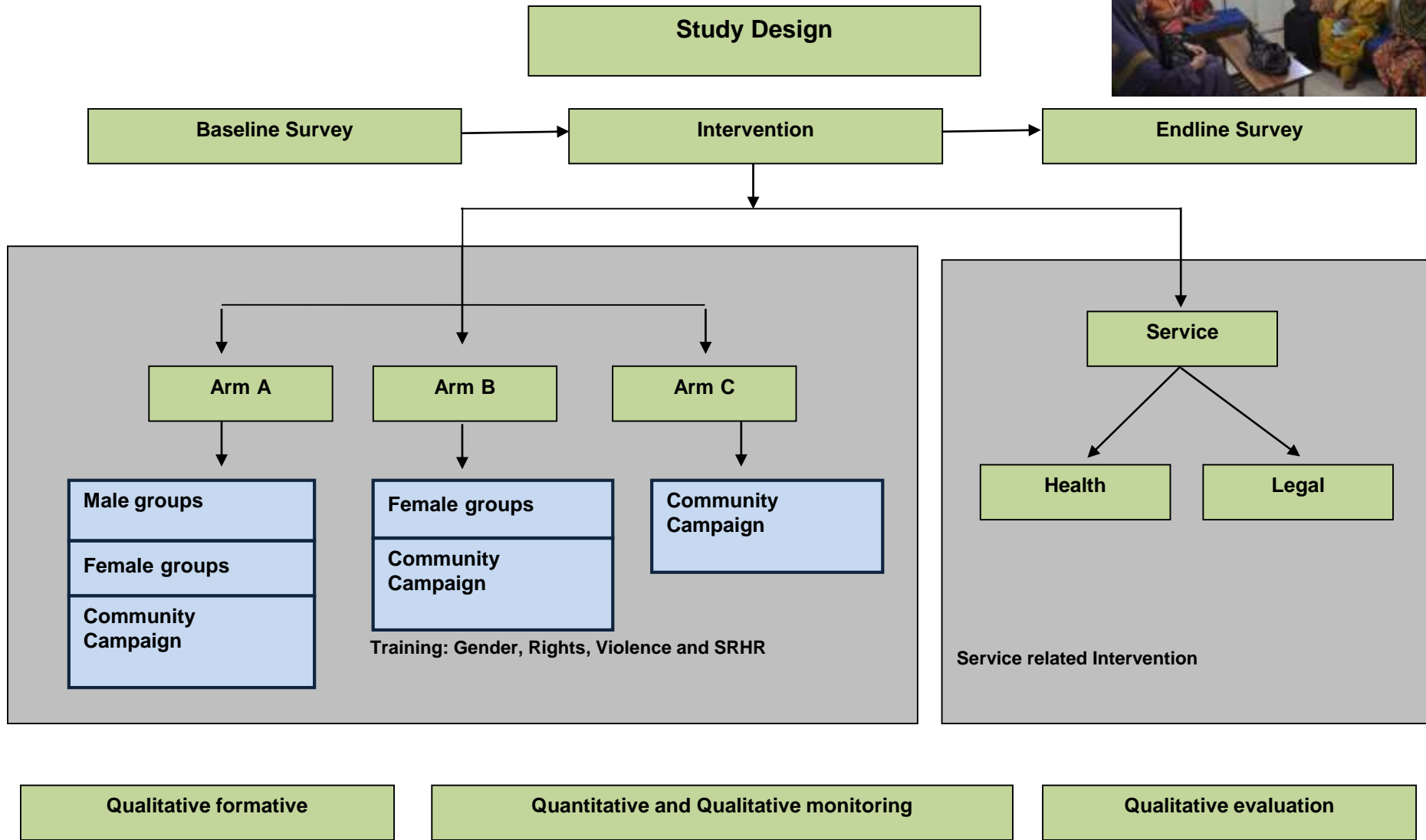
- Study site – 19 slums within 2km from Marie Stopes Clinics in three areas of Dhaka city
- Main target groups:
  - Females aged 10-29
  - Males aged 18-35
  - Community leaders & the community



# Intervention components

<u>Group Level</u> (Group n=600)	<u>Community Level</u>	<u>Societal Level</u>
<p>13 two-hour participatory group sessions over 20 months on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender, rights &amp; VAWG</li> <li>• SRH &amp; rights</li> <li>• Laws/legal remedies</li> <li>• Available services</li> <li>• Life skills</li> </ul> <p>* Attendance=5.8 sessions/group member</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community orientation</li> <li>• Recruitment and engagement of community activists</li> <li>• Celebration of special days (drama, filmshow, rally, etc)</li> <li>• Display and distribution of BCC materials</li> <li>• One stop service center:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Health services &amp; referrals</i></li> <li>- <i>Legal advice and representation</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitization lawyers, judges, prosecutors, police</li> <li>• Sensitization of health professionals and marriage registrars</li> <li>• Policy advocacy with judiciary, police, line ministries, NGOs, etc</li> <li>• Media campaign using TV and radio</li> </ul>

# SAFE evaluation design: RCT





# Important to remember!

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SAFE's impact was measured not among  
the group members, but  
among a representative sample  
drawn from each cluster



## Sample size by arm at Baseline (2012) and Endline (2014)

Arms	Baseline		Endline	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Arm A (Community+ Female + Male)	1487	537	1504	542
Arm B (Community + Female)	1491	532	1560	536
Arm C (Community)	1480	548	1517	542
<b>All Arms</b>	<b>4458</b>	<b>1617</b>	<b>4581</b>	<b>1620</b>

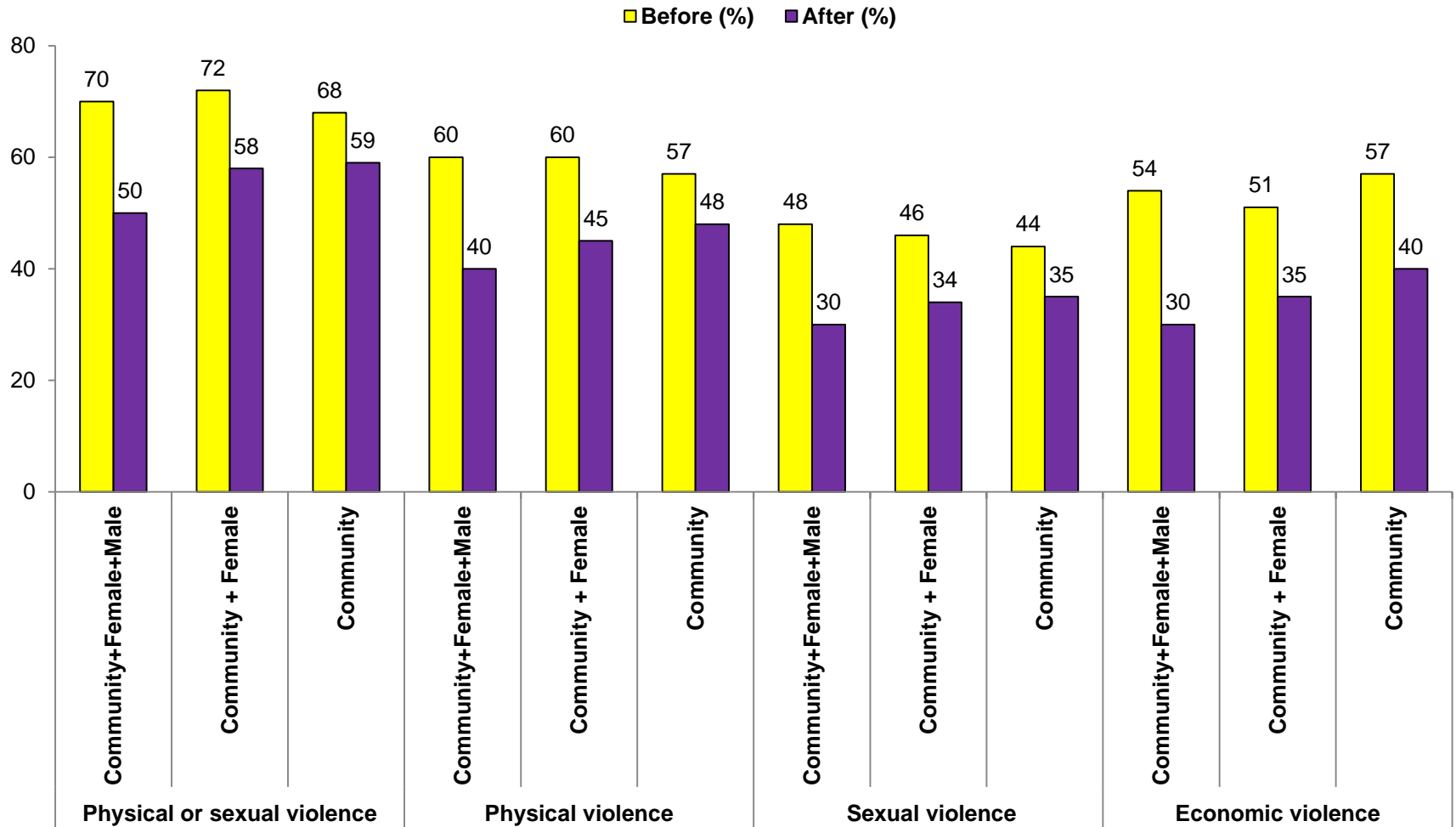
# SAFE surveys and analysis



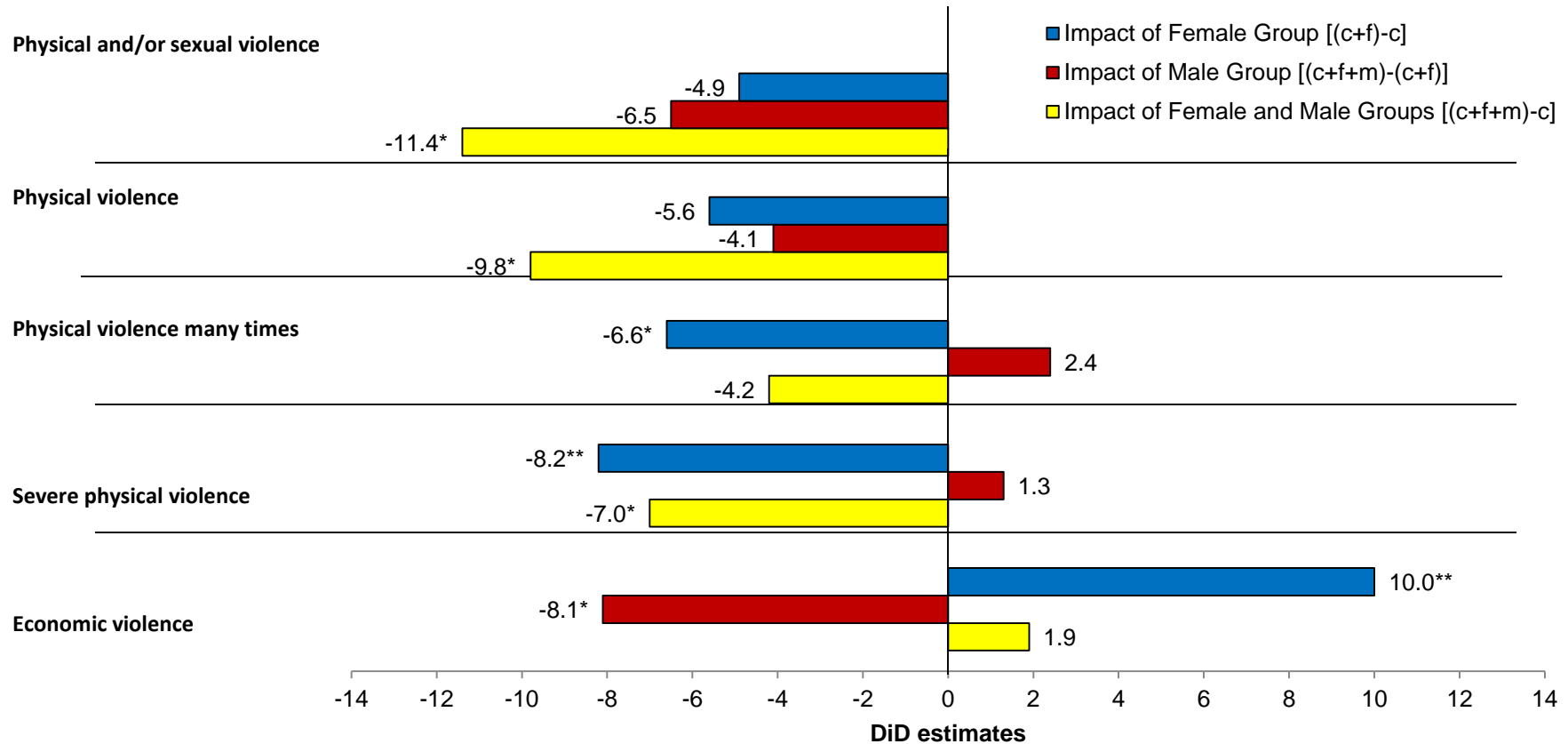
- Mapping and household listing of 19 slums
- Formation of 234 contiguous clusters using natural or artificial boundaries with 50-100 households in between clusters as buffers. The clusters were randomly assigned to different arms
- This analysis includes currently married women (n=5,336)
- Difference-in-difference analysis was used for assessing impact

# Results

# Change in violence against currently married adolescent girls aged 15-19 years before and after the intervention



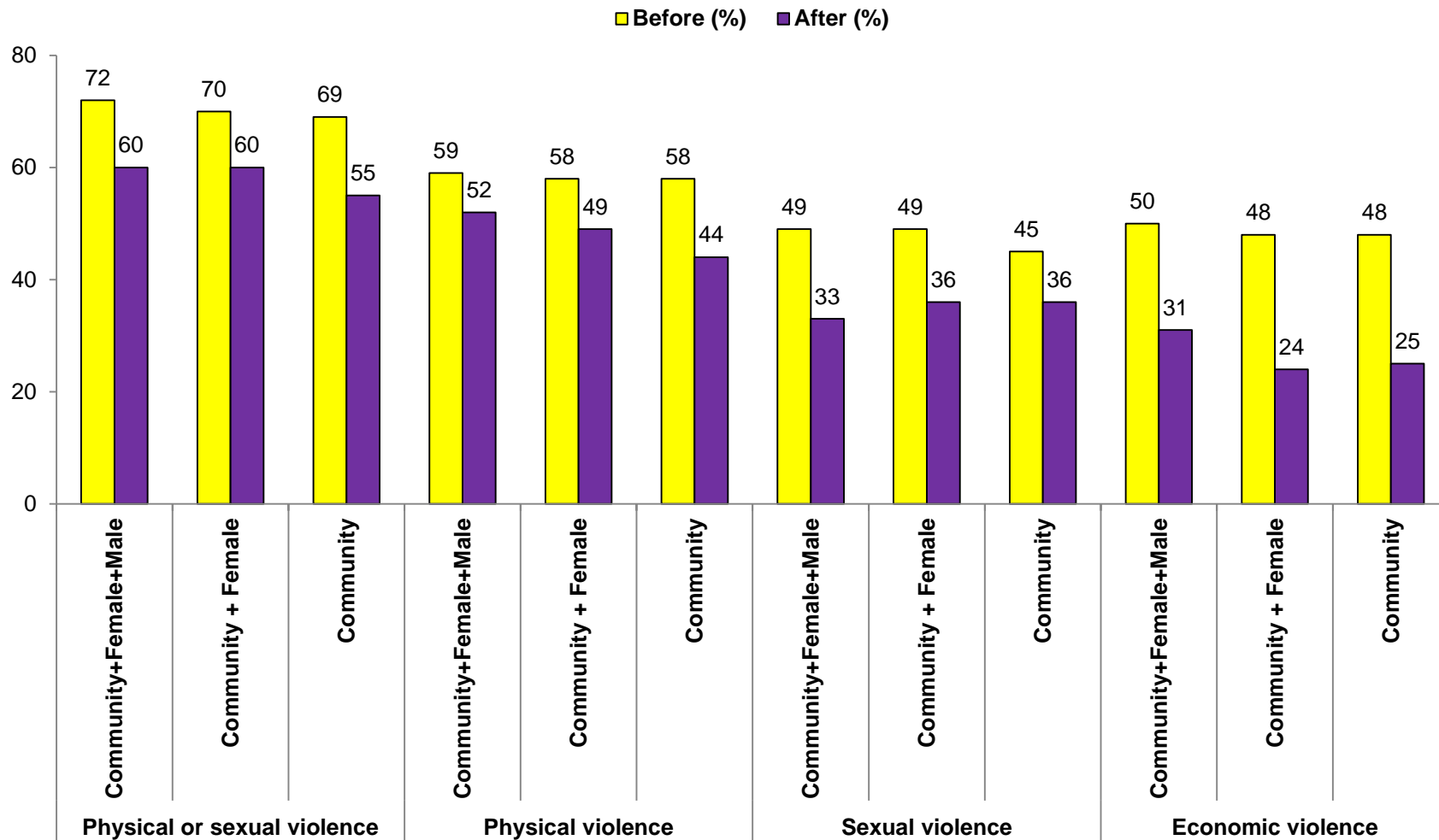
# Impact of SAFE on spousal violence against currently married adolescent girls in Dhaka slums, percentage points



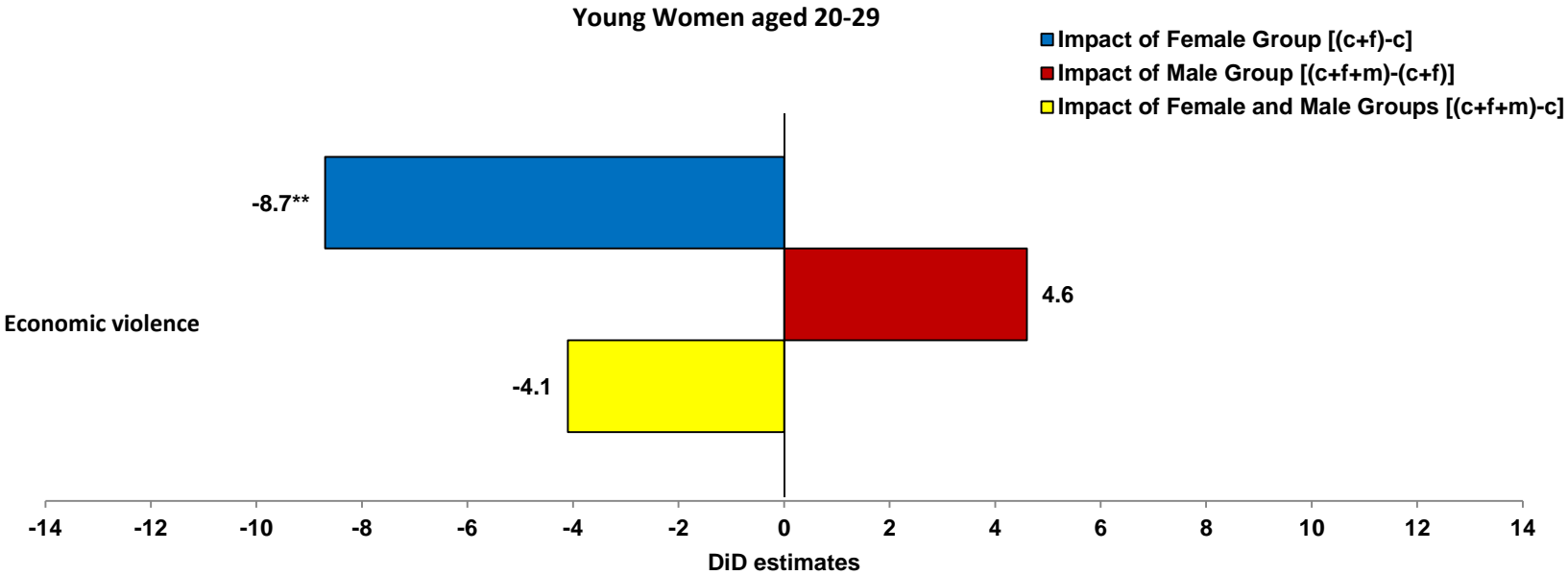
c + f + m = Community mobilization, female and male group intervention  
 c + f = Community mobilization and female group intervention  
 c = Community mobilization

\*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*  $p < 0.1$

# Change in violence against currently married young women aged 20-29 years, before and after intervention



# Impact of SAFE on spousal violence against currently married young women in Dhaka slums, percentage points



c + f + m = Community mobilization, female and male group intervention  
c + f = Community mobilization and female group intervention  
c = Community mobilization

\*\*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*  $p < 0.1$



# Discussion

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- SAFE reduced IPV at the cluster level demonstrating that integration of group sessions; community mobilization & service provision works
- High migration rates and impact assessment at cluster level diluted the effect
- It can only be assumed that the effect size was much greater for SAFE group members

## Discussion (continued)



- Married adolescent girls benefitted most indicating the need for targeting them in similar interventions
- It is important to work with both females and males for reducing incidence of physical &/or sexual violence
- Sessions with adolescents girls only proved to be a double-edged sword. It reduced frequency and severity of physical violence, but increased economic violence, emphasizing importance of working with both female and male groups

## Discussion (continued)



- Female group only intervention, however, reduced economic violence against young women indicating the need for devising different strategies for these two different age groups of females
- More research is needed for finding ways to reduce physical & sexual IPV against young women

# Acknowledgements



- We acknowledge with gratitude funding from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN)
- We are grateful to the slum population
- We are thankful to all the project staff

# icddr,b thanks its Core Donors

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Canada

