

Keeping adolescent girls safe from violence

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Violence against women and children is a global epidemic that carries lifelong consequences for individuals, families, and communities. Adolescent girls are particularly at risk because they may not have access to supportive interventions, most of which are aimed at supporting either married adult females or younger children.

To address this gap, the International Rescue Committee in Nimba County, Liberia founded the Girl Empower program, which seeks to equip [adolescent girls](#) with the skills to make healthy, strategic life choices and to stay safe from [sexual abuse](#).

CUNY SPH Associate Professor Elizabeth Kelvin and team conducted a cluster randomized controlled trial to evaluate the program's impact. The results were published in the journal *SSM Population Health*.

Kelvin and colleagues found that, 24 months post-baseline and 12 months after program completion, girls in the intervention had more egalitarian attitudes about gender roles, better life skills, and safer sexual and reproductive health behavior compared to girls in the [control group](#), but there

was no difference in experiences of sexual violence.

"The program led to important improvements in the girl's lives," Kelvin says. "But to address sexual violence it may be necessary to design interventions for boys and men that complement those offered to girls."

More information: Berk Özler et al. Girl Empower – A gender transformative mentoring and cash transfer intervention to promote adolescent wellbeing: Impact findings from a cluster-randomized controlled trial in Liberia, *SSM - Population Health* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ssmph.2019.100527](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2019.100527)

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