

Case study: QuIP & RCT to evaluate a cash transfer and gender training programme in Malawi

**Concern Worldwide**  
Commissioner

**Malawi**  
Country of study

**24-48**  
Interviews/round

**2018, 2020 & 2021**  
Years of study

**About the project:**

The Concern Worldwide ‘Graduation’ programme was a 22-month intense intervention to address some of the challenges of extreme poverty in Malawi. The programme consisted of: consumption support (in the form of a regular cash transfer), skills training and coaching, access to financial services, and a one-off larger capital transfer. A key aim of the research was to estimate the role that gender plays in the Graduation model, so the programme design included three distinct treatment arms: 1) cash transfer targeted at men, 2) cash transfer targeted at women, 3) treatment 2 plus an additional couples training, known as ‘Umodzi’, which aimed to tackle gender exclusion through engaging couples on issues such as gender norms, power dynamics, decision-making, budgeting, violence, positive parenting, and healthy relationships. Bath SDR worked with the Trinity Impact Evaluation Unit (TIME) at Trinity College Dublin, who led the five-year mixed method research, to incorporate three QuIP studies and an RCT to establish the impact and added value of the gender training alongside other interventions.

**Why use QuIP:**

QuIP interviews were used to help triangulate reported outcomes from the RCT and provide more detail on **why** and **how** respondents perceived intended outcome domains to have changed. Unprompted reported drivers of change helped to establish the extent to which they were linked to the programme interventions, and/or external factors.

**Approach:**

- The RCT consisted of three survey rounds: Baseline, Endline 1 (5 months post-programme) and Endline 2 (17 months post-programme)
- QuIP rounds were integrated at Baseline (24 pilot interviews) and Endline 1 (2 x rounds of 48 interviews)
- Case selection was based on treatment type (targeting and exposure to Umodzi) and location (two districts, one matri- and one patrilineal)
- Focus Group Discussions were used in each round to understand shifts in community dynamics and norms, and were unblindfolded in the final round to ask specific questions about perceptions of the programme



**Key findings:**

- Many respondents linked Concern cash and capital transfers to greater investment in business and farming, leading to increased income which was cited as a key driver of increased purchasing power and reduced reliance on casual labour.
- Most respondents also claimed to be saving more, predominantly due to increased income but VSL membership and financial advice from Concern were also mentioned
- Gender messaging, from the Umodzi training and the Graduation programme more generally, was reported by some to have influenced improved sharing of household roles and decision-making, and improved ability to resolve conflicts. However these results were mixed and nuanced, with some claiming that training simply reinforced existing norms.

Example findings presented overleaf are from the complete RCT dataset and the QuIP dataset combining the second and third qualitative rounds (96 individual respondents in total). The focus is on empowerment related outcomes because they are key to the research questions and offer useful examples of how the RCT and QuIP data were combined and compared.

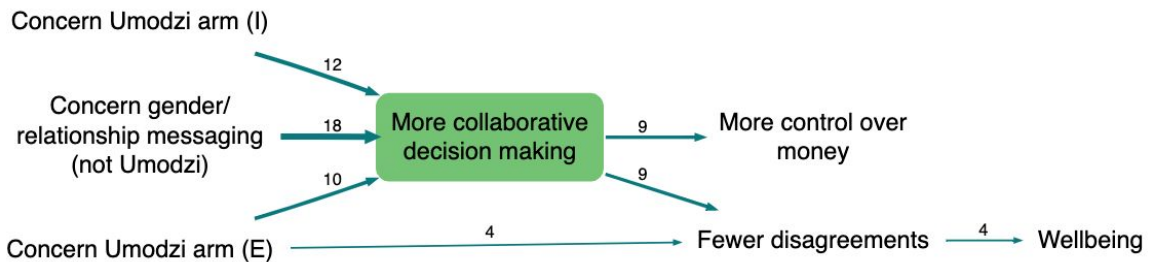
**Use of findings:**

“Incorporating the QuIP has played an important role in helping to understand mechanisms of change in the Graduation programme in Malawi, particularly around income generating activities, changes in welfare and intrahousehold bargaining power. Inclusion of the qualitative component of the research in feedback to the donor led to a greater appreciation of the channels of change and improved interpretation of the quantitative findings.”

## Decision making

The RCT found that at endline 1, 5 months post-programme, “productive empowerment” (agency in financial decisions) increased for both of the female targeted arms (with and without Umodzi training). At endline 2, 17 months post-programme, women in Umodzi households still had a significantly higher level of productive empowerment.

### Causal map showing reported drivers and outcomes of more collaborative decision making



The QuIP findings were able to highlight the causal pathways related to decision making from the perspective of programme participants. At endline 1 many women reported changes in collaborative decision making, to varying extents. These respondents claimed that they had more of a say in decision making at the household level in areas including income generating activities and budgeting. The main drivers cited by respondents in relation to changes in decision making were all related to the Graduation programme. However, analysis of the respondents' exposure to Umodzi and the way that they described the gender messaging revealed that respondents who did not participate in Umodzi still cited this pathway, highlighting a spillover effect which was also confirmed in the process evaluation.

#### How to read causal maps:

Maps are designed to be read from left to right. The direction of the arrowhead on each link reflects the direction of causation or influence.

Above each link there is a number which represents the number of participants who made that causal claim. In a 'path trace' map, in each factor box there is a number which represents how many participants linked that factor to the selected 'from' factor right at the start.

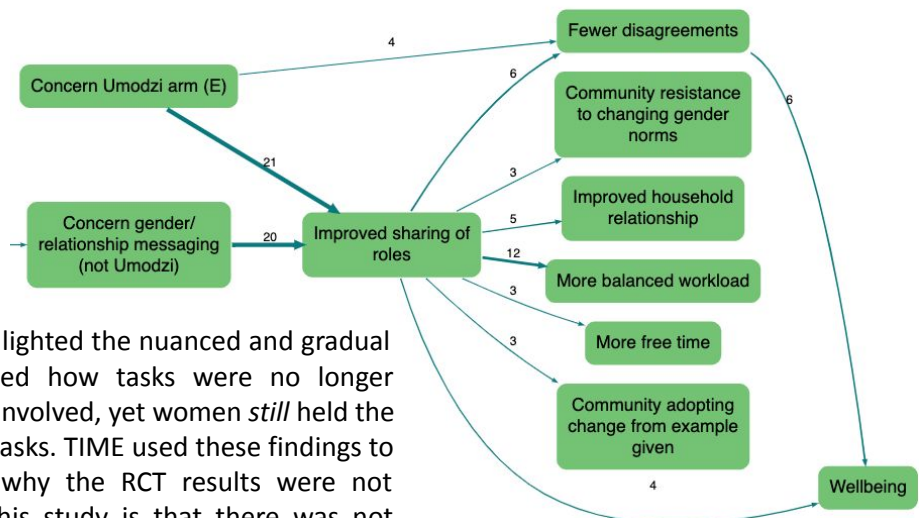
All maps presented here have been filtered to remove links reported by fewer than five respondents.

## Chore equality

The RCT found that at endline 1, 5 months post-programme, “chore equality” scores were higher for Umodzi households than the control arm and all other treatment arms. However, at endline 2, 17 months post-programme, these results were not sustained.

Similarly, the QuIP found that at endline 1 many women, particularly those from Umodzi households reported improved role sharing. Respondents mentioned some changes in roles including cooking, cleaning, construction, gardening and childcare.

### Causal map showing reported drivers and outcomes of improved chore sharing



However, the detailed QuIP narratives highlighted the nuanced and gradual nature of these changes; some described how tasks were no longer considered gendered and men were more involved, yet women *still* held the primary responsibility for certain of these tasks. TIME used these findings to help provide potential explanations for why the RCT results were not sustained at endline 2. A limitation of this study is that there was not another QuIP round at endline 2 to offer more insight into the causal pathways over time.