

Social and behavior change can improve gender norms among adolescents in Liberia.

Insights from a Study Exploring Gender Equitable Norms Among Female and Male Adolescents in Liberia.

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INTRODUCTION

- Gender inequity is a critical cross cutting variable in behavioral research and equitable gender norms are associated with crucial health behaviors.
- Breakthrough ACTION Liberia’s baseline study measured gender norms among female and male adolescents in Liberia using the gender equitable men (GEM) scale in Bomi and Bong (interventions counties) and Gbarpolu (control site).

METHODS

- Included male adolescents not in a union or married
- Included female adolescents of all marital statuses
- Cross sectional household survey
- GEM scale
- Liberian proportional piling scale
- Divided into low, medium and high categories based on tertiles

Table 4.6 Support for Gender Equitable Sexual Relationships

	Female Adolescents				Male Adolescents			
	Intervention			Control	Intervention			Control
	Bong N=385 %	Bomi N=203 %	Total N=588 %	Gbarpolu N=193 %	Bong N=388 %	Bomi N=190 %	Total N=785 %	Gbarpolu N=196 %
Tertile grp	(385) %	(203) %	(588) %	(193) %	(375) %	(190) %	(578) %	(196) %
Low	33.5	34.0	33.7	35.2	42.4	21.6	35.4	31.8
Medium	32.0	38.9	34.4	33.2	34.4	34.7	34.5	29.2
High	34.6	27.1	32.0	31.6	23.2	43.7	30.1	39.1

Table 4.7 Support for Gender Equitable Reproductive Health

	Female Adolescents				Male Adolescents			
	Intervention			Control	Intervention			Control
	Bong N=385 %	Bomi N=203 %	Total N=588 %	Gbarpolu N=193 %	Bong N=388 %	Bomi N=190 %	Total N=785 %	Gbarpolu N=196 %
Tertile grp	(385) %	(203) %	(588) %	(193) %	(388) %	(190) %	(578) %	(196) %
Low	30.1	31.5	30.6	42.0	45.6	20.5	37.2	28.1
Medium	28.3	46.3	34.5	31.1	37.3	31.1	35.2	33.3
High	41.6	22.2	34.9	26.9	17.1	48.4	27.6	38.5

Table 4.8 Support for Gender Equitable Domestic Chores and Daily Life

	Female Adolescents				Male Adolescents			
	Intervention			Control	Intervention			Control
	Bong N=385 %	Bomi N=203 %	Total N=588 %	Gbarpolu N=193 %	Bong N=388 %	Bomi N=190 %	Total N=785 %	Gbarpolu N=196 %
Tertile grp	(385) %	(203) %	(588) %	(193) %	(388) %	(190) %	(578) %	(196) %
Low	33.5	21.2	29.3	48.7	36.8	31.6	35.0	38.0
Medium	32.5	38.9	34.7	35.2	31.7	33.7	32.4	32.3
High	34.0	39.9	36.1	16.1	31.5	34.7	32.6	29.7

RESULTS

- **Sexual relationships:** gender inequitable norms varied across sites for both males and females. Lowest rates were reported by females in Bomi, but males in Bomi reported higher rates.
- **Reproductive health:** Females reported high rates of inequitable norms in Bong, whereas males reported high rates of inequitable norms in Bomi.
- **Domestic chores/daily life:** Females reported higher inequitable norms in intervention vs control counties; male reports did not vary between sites.
- **Partner violence:** In Bomi, many more females reported equitable norms, whereas more males reported inequitable norms.

DISCUSSION



Differing perceptions of gender norms by females vs males shows there is work to be done to improve gender norms, ensuring all have access to information on what equity entails.



Couple communication could be an area for improvement, ensuring that males and females discuss their expectations around decision making responsibilities at home, and partner violence.



SBC can help address couple communication and gender equity before adolescents enter domestic partnerships.



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