

## **Overview of Impact of Just Like My Child Foundation's Girl Power Project®**

Just Like My Child Foundation (JLMC) has been working in Central Uganda since 2006. In 2009, after witnessing the obstacles that adolescent girls face in completing their education as a result of gender norms, gender-based violence and harmful cultural practices, and the negative impact these phenomena have on the overall development of the country, JLMC created the Girl Power Project® (GPP).

JLMC has engaged in data collection around the impact of the Girl Power Project® for two separate research studies. In September 2015, JLMC began gathering data internally for a monitoring and evaluation framework designed to judge the efficacy of the 2-year-long GPP curriculum in shifting the attitudes and behaviors of girls who were educated with the GPP program. Additionally, in September 2017, JLMC engaged an objective third party, Texas A&M University, to assess the impact of the GPP at the community level -- on boys, parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders.

This report provides a detailed description of the GPP program and presents an overview of the research findings from both studies, highlighting the results to date of these efforts.

### **About Just Like My Child Foundation (JLMC):**

JLMC's mission is to empower vulnerable adolescent girls by enabling them to create healthy, self-sustaining families who prosper without further aid. This mission is being fulfilled in Central Uganda with the implementation of JLMC's Girl Power Project, an evidence based intervention that has impacted nearly 5,000 teenage girls.

With over a decade of experience in successful program implementation in Central Uganda and through the adoption of current evidence-based standards and best practices for girl-focused programming JLMC is uniquely positioned to deliver this programming and does so with a team of dynamic, highly educated Ugandan leaders who serve as positive role models to girl participants.

### **Context:**

In Central Uganda, there are an estimated one million adolescent girls ages 10-19 years. Of these, 90% experience vulnerabilities on multiple levels - individually, within households, in their communities, and because of cultural and societal norms. Nationally, the average number of years girls attend school is 4.5 (the average for boys is 2 years higher at 6.8) and nearly 50% of girls will drop out or be pulled out of school by parents/guardians by age 15.6. An estimated 40%-50% of all Ugandan women marry before age 18 and an estimated 15% marry by age 15.7. Girls in rural areas, such as the communities found in Central Uganda, are married earlier and on average have three more children than their urban counterparts.

JLMC learned from household surveys conducted in 2016, utilizing Population Council's Girl Roster Toolkit, that girls living in the Luwero District in Central Uganda are more vulnerable than what national statistics indicate. For instance, 64% of girls were found to be behind grade for their age, which is 10% higher than the national average of 53.8%. Only 39.4% of girls sampled in Luwero District are living with both parents compared to the national average 45.5% and over 77% were experiencing one or more of the following vulnerabilities: living with only one or neither parent; behind classroom grade for their age; higher than average household poverty; and instances of early pregnancy.

### **The Girl Power Project (GPP):**

In response to the challenges vulnerable adolescent girls face in this context, JLMC designed the replicable GPP curriculum and system of delivery to empower adolescent girls to stay in school and protect them from early child marriage, disease, early pregnancy and violence as well as equipping them with critical assets they need to overcome these barriers and navigate adolescence successfully. Research indicates that when a girl has these "assets", she is more able to succeed, specifically in negotiating life-changing decisions that affect herself and her family and also to be engaged in decision-making in her community.

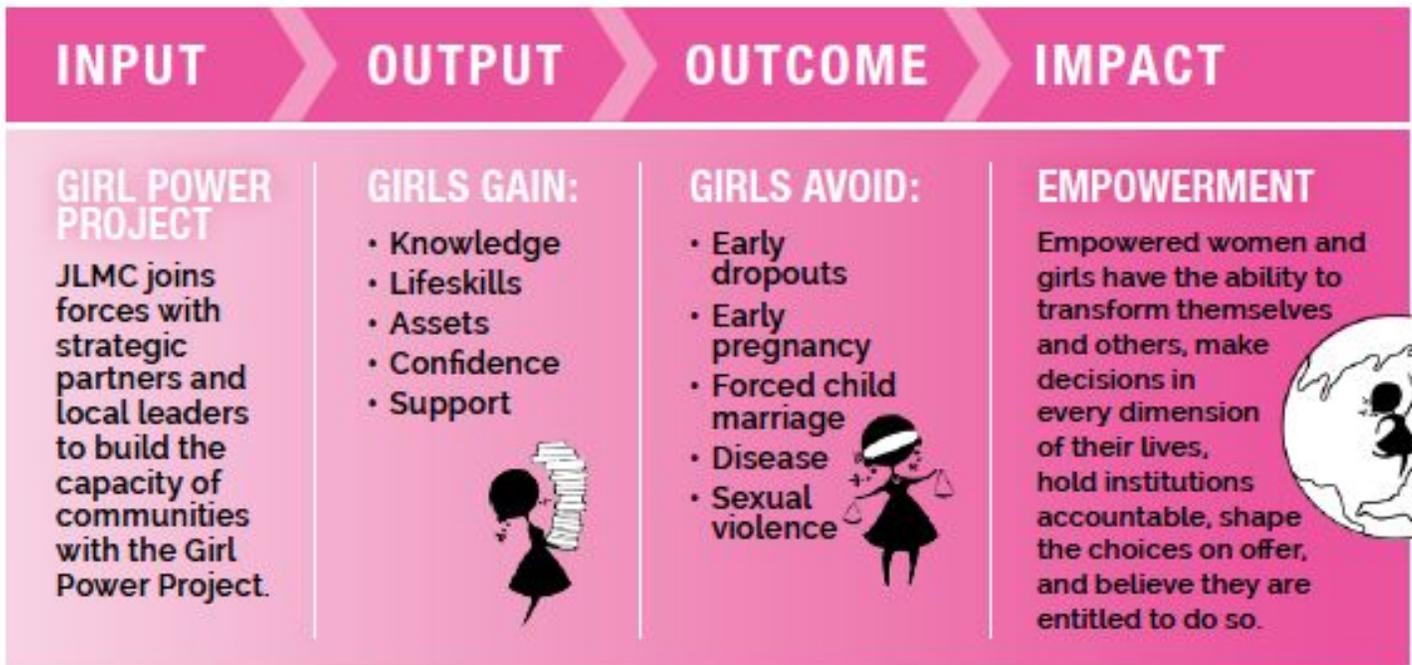
Equipping girls with empowering assets is vital because the health and wellbeing of the next generation is dependent on the health and well-being of adolescent girls, many of whom will be mothers in the next five years.

JLMC aims to reach 50-80% of girls 12-15 years of age in communities through the Girl Power Project curriculum in Central Uganda, thereby administering a “social vaccine” to inoculate girls against harmful cultural norms. This includes over 60 hours of in-school workshops, camp experiences, and after-school club sessions taught by local mentors over the course of two years.

JLMC understands that a critical input required for the ultimate achievement of the GPP theory of change, is the creation of an enabling environment for empowerment of girls to exist and flourish. This is accomplished by training and building the capacity of parents and local community members to sustain GPP accomplishments long-term.



## THE GIRL POWER PROJECT'S THEORY OF CHANGE



GPP begins by training parents in human rights (with an emphasis on women's and children's rights), Ugandan laws, the importance of keeping girls in school and the links to reducing vulnerabilities that girls face, and how to refer rights violations and crimes to the appropriate authorities. Before girls can participate in GPP, parents and teachers must sign a formal agreement to demonstrate that they value the empowerment of girls and commit to support their daughters and pupils. A portion of these adults are also trained by JLMC to be Girl Power Advocates, volunteers who commit to support girls during their participation in the Girl Power Project and beyond.

Additionally, boys 12-15 years old, living in the same communities and attending the same schools where the GPP is delivered, receive a smaller dose of life skills education in puberty, sexual and gender based violence, and reproductive health – to build the knowledge and assets they too need to successfully navigate adolescence, which will ultimately benefit girls.

The GPP aims to administer this “social vaccine” to disrupt harmful cultural norms that primarily affect adolescent girls – permanently shift attitudes, beliefs, and practices. GPP is intended to directly impact the education and empowerment of girls who in turn are able to transform themselves and others, make decisions in every dimension of their lives, hold institutions accountable, and shape the choices they make about prevailing norms regarding education, marriage, and motherhood. Fundamentally, GPP is about developing young leaders who will be able to not only enjoy a better quality of life but also change the present culture. The Girl Power Project has reached nearly 5,000 girls at 71 primary schools in Central Uganda.

### **JLMC's Theory of Empowerment:**

The ultimate goal of the GPP is to empower girls. Empowerment, a difficult concept to measure, is a process through which an individual's capabilities to lead the kind of life they have reason to value is enhanced. In order to measure whether the GPP had an affect on girls' level of empowerment, two theoretical frameworks have been utilized; the Three Expressions of Power<sup>1</sup> and the Six Dimensions of Empowerment<sup>2</sup>.

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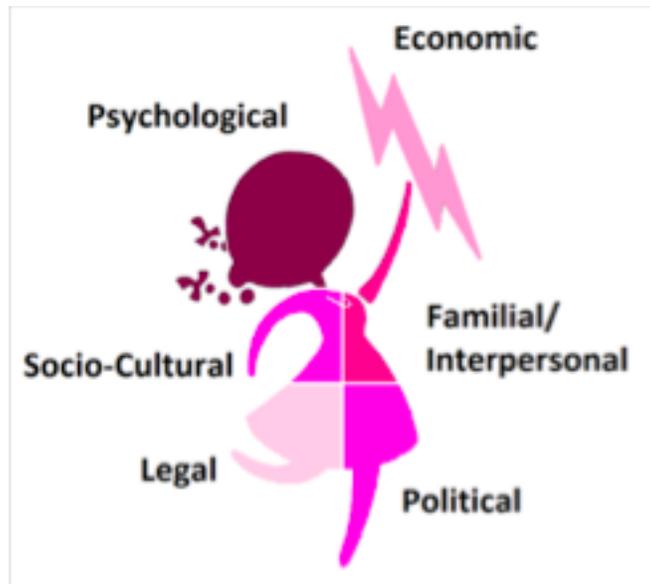
<sup>1</sup> Oxaal, Z., and Baden, S. (1997). Gender and empowerment: definitions, approaches, and implications for policy. *University of Sussex: Institute of Development Studies*, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Malhotra, A., Schuler, S., Boender, C. (2002). Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development. *The World Bank*.

**Three Expressions of Empowerment:** In the case of personal empowerment, power is a positive concept, usefully broken down into three positive expressions of power.



**Six Dimensions of Empowerment:** A multidimensional framework is needed to encompass different dimensions of empowerment rather than narrowly define it.

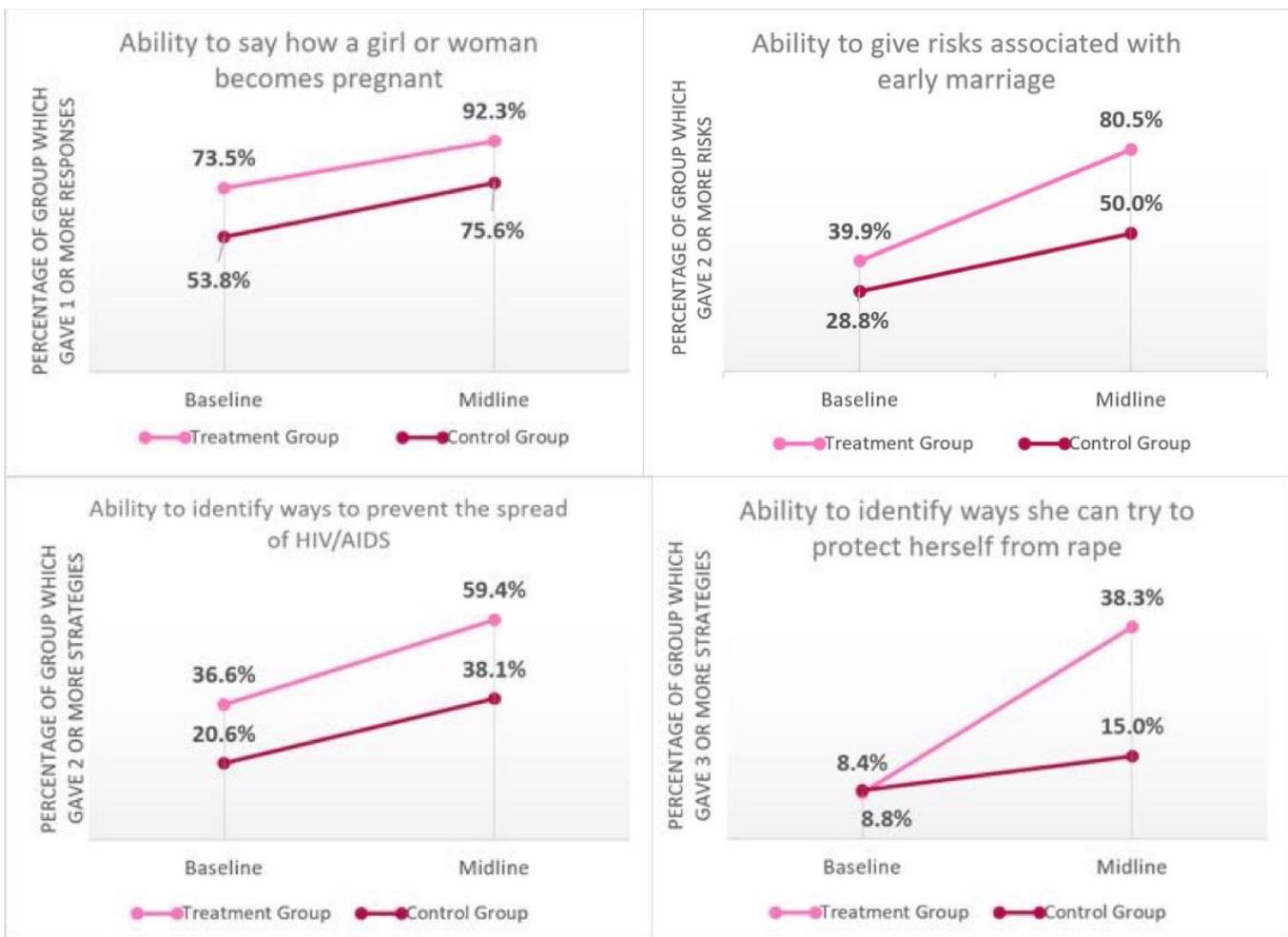


**Internal Research Findings on Girl Power Project’s Impact on Girls:**

In 2015, JLMC set out to evaluate the impact of the Girl Power Project. The two year study adopted a quasi experimental phase in design to evaluate the projects causal impact on outcomes.

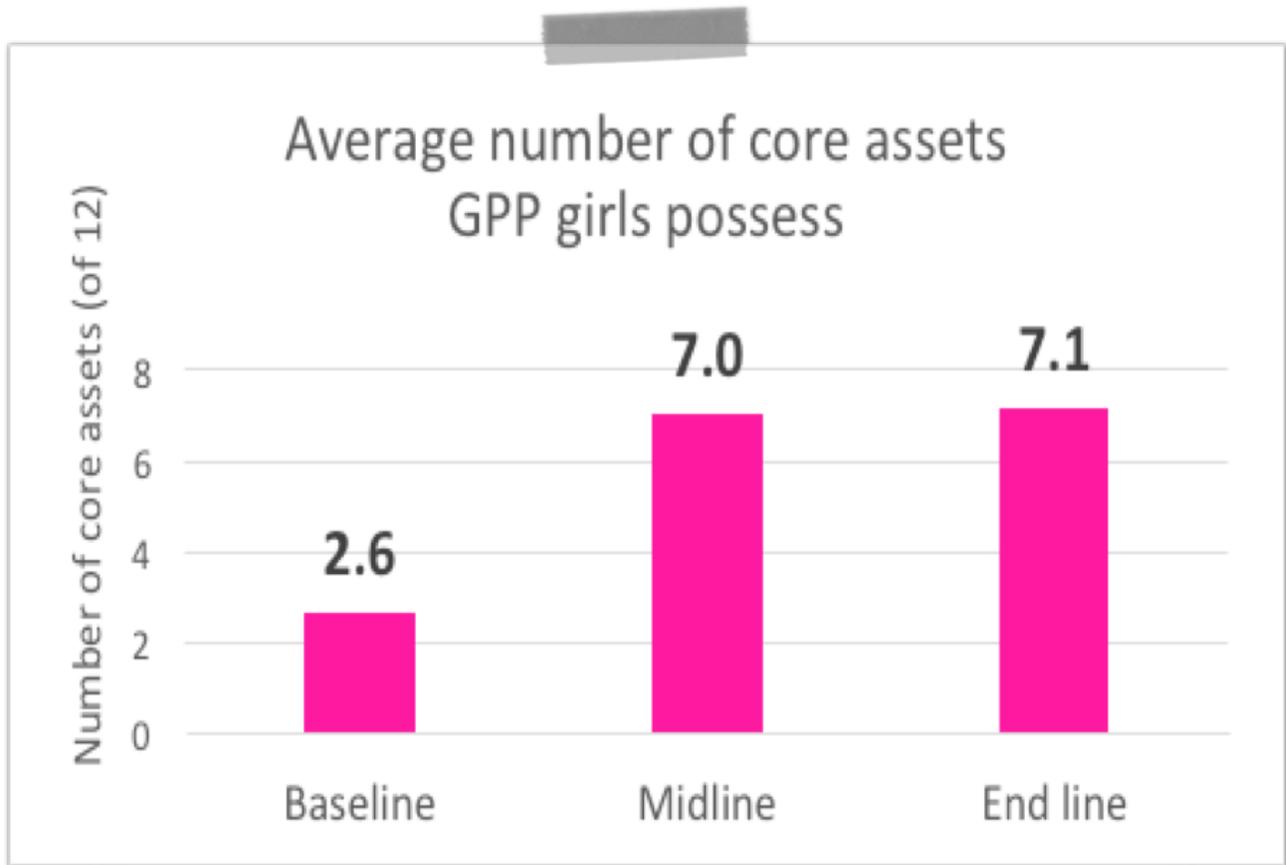
A survey was designed to measure girls personal empowerment via their demonstration of knowledge and attitudes based on Girl Power Project curriculum. The survey questions were administered to two cohorts of girls (treatment and control) at two points and (treatment) at three points. Over 750 girls participated in the study.

Midway through the study, the preliminary results were clear. The girl Power Project was working. The treatment group outperformed the control group across all critical indicators.

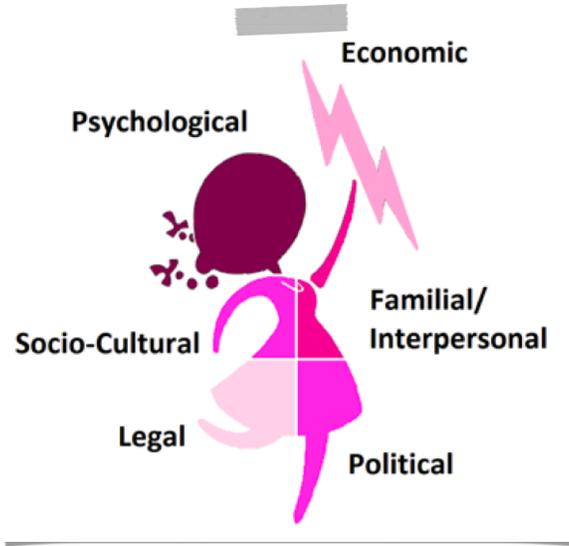


JLMC chose a phased in study design for ethical reasons as there was concern that girls in the control group would become victims of early pregnancy, marriage, disease or violence before the Girl Power Project was brought to their schools. With sufficient data with which to compare the treatment and control groups and out of a feeling of urgency for the safety of the girls, JLMC trained the control group in the Girl Power Project and continued to study gains in the treatment group through the end line.

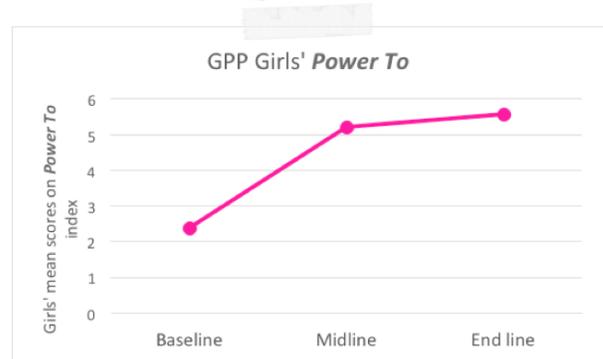
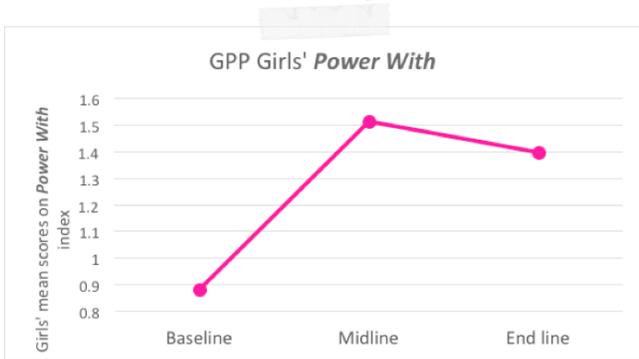
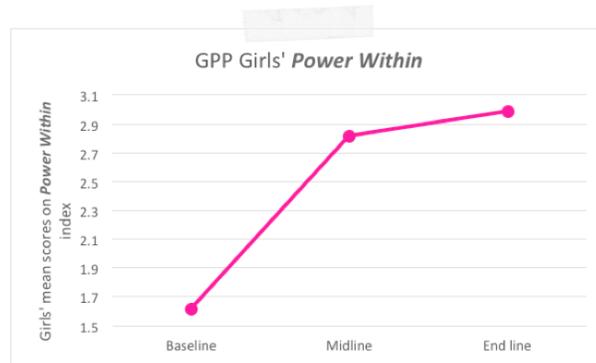
In the second year of Girl Power Project programming, participants receive club sessions designed to put their mentorship and leadership skills into practice, strengthen their learning and provide additional information. JLMC found at the end of the second year, girls retained the information they had learned in the first year and gained additional assets.



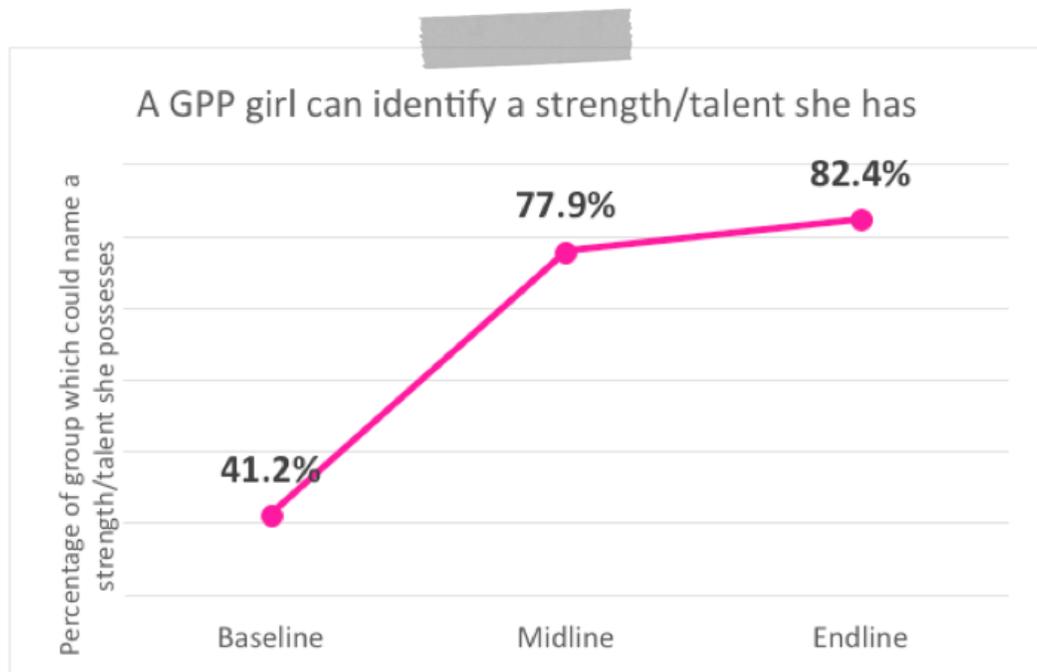
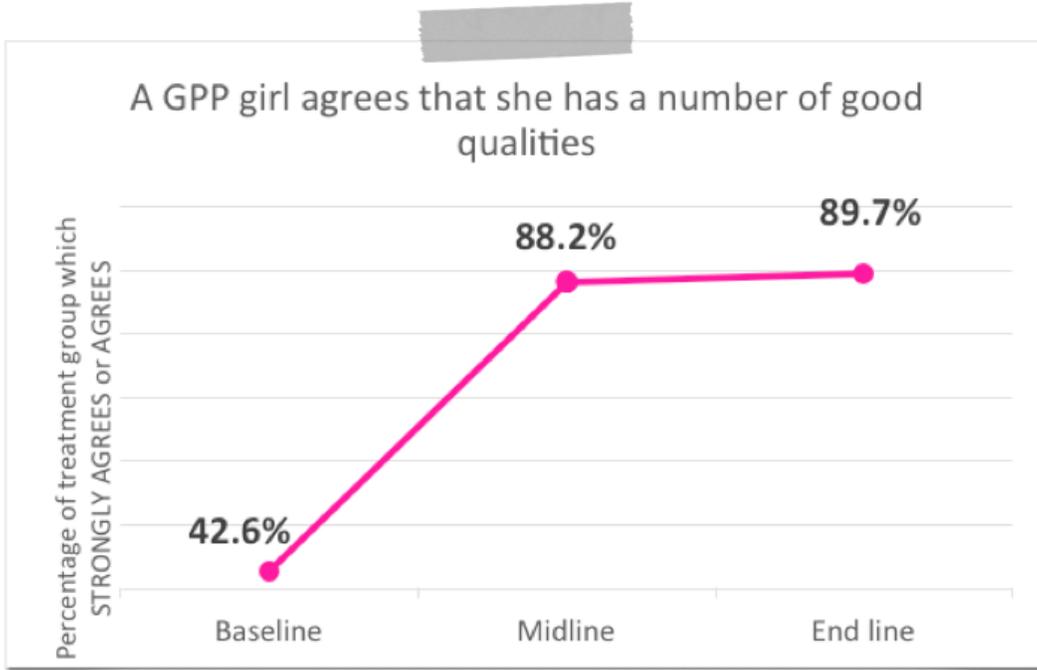
Girl Power Project girls six dimensions of empowerment have increased. Survey questions were designed, grouped and summed into indices for each dimension of empowerment.



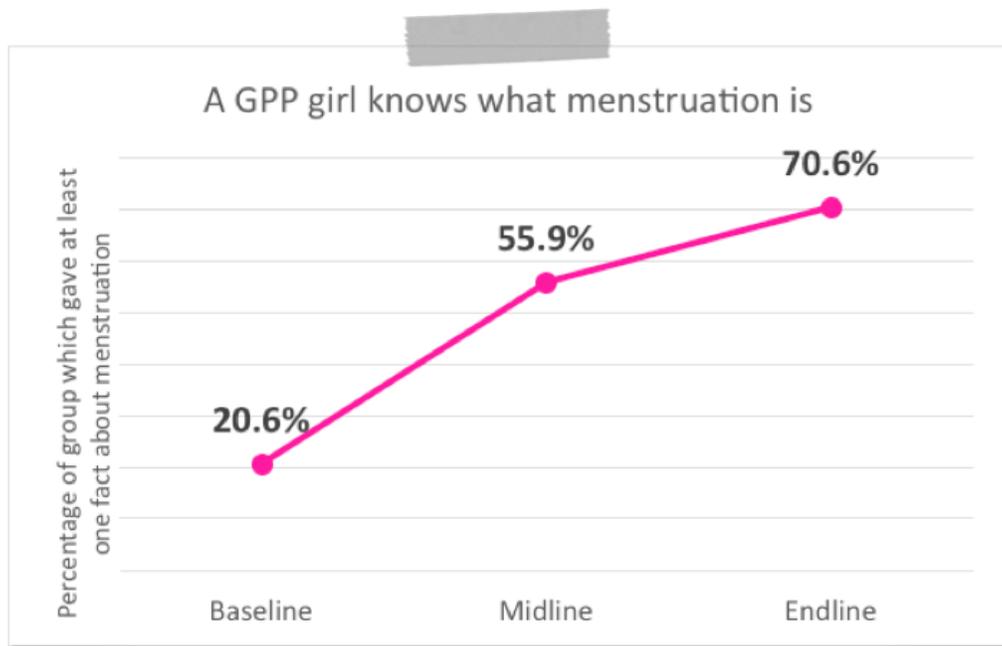
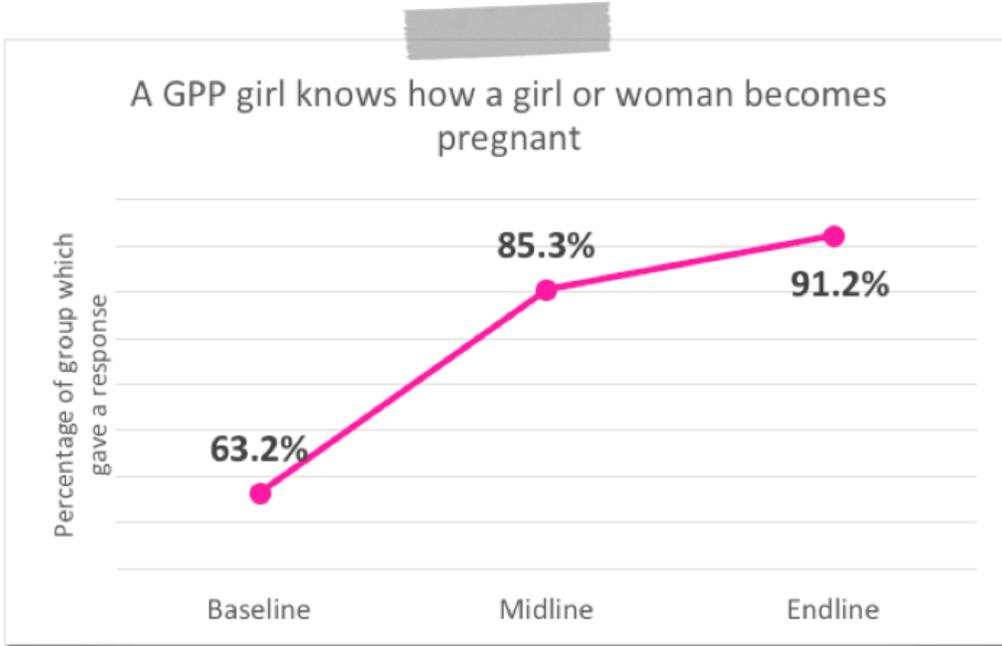
Girl Power Project girls have increased their power within, power with and power to. Each question on the survey measured a girls expression of at least one of these three forms of power.



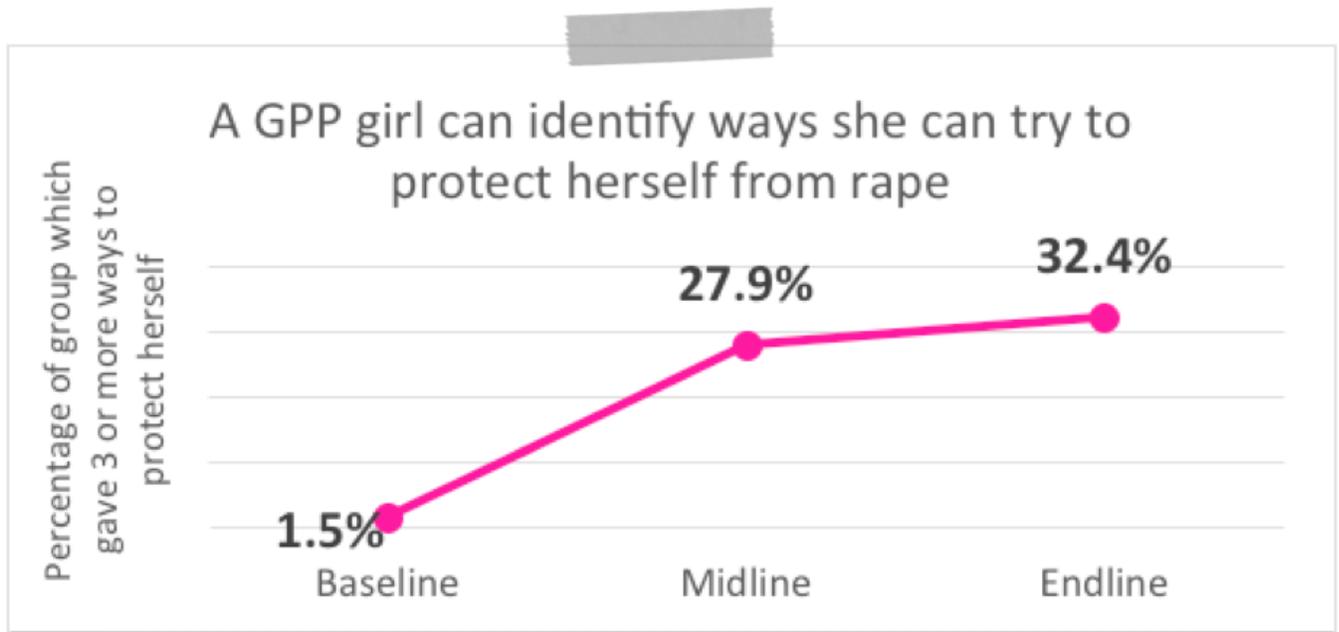
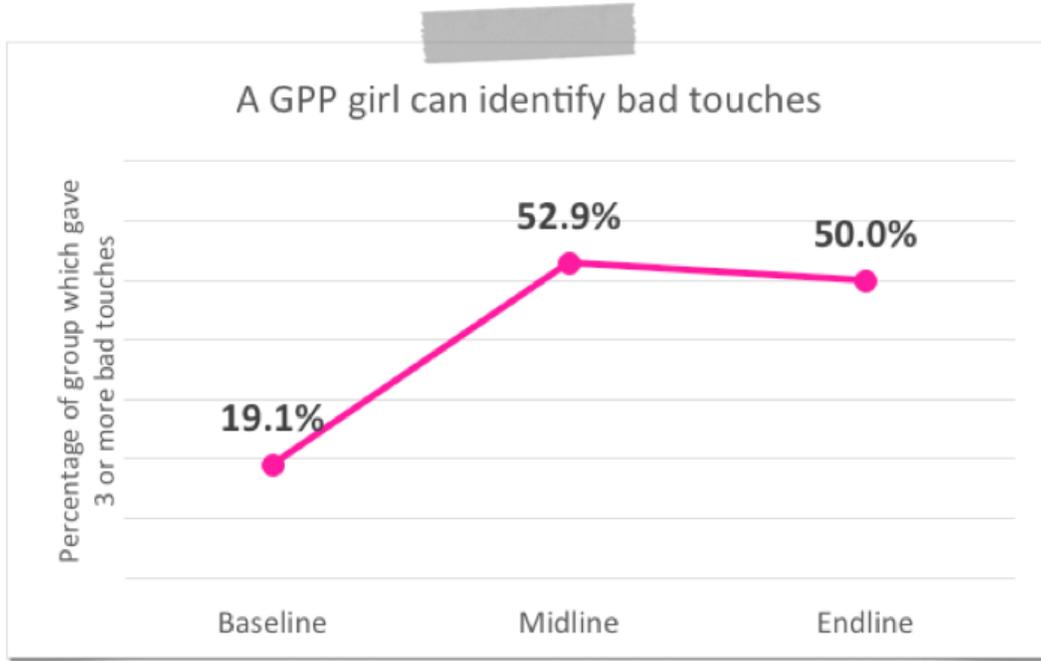
Girl Power Project girls feel better about themselves:



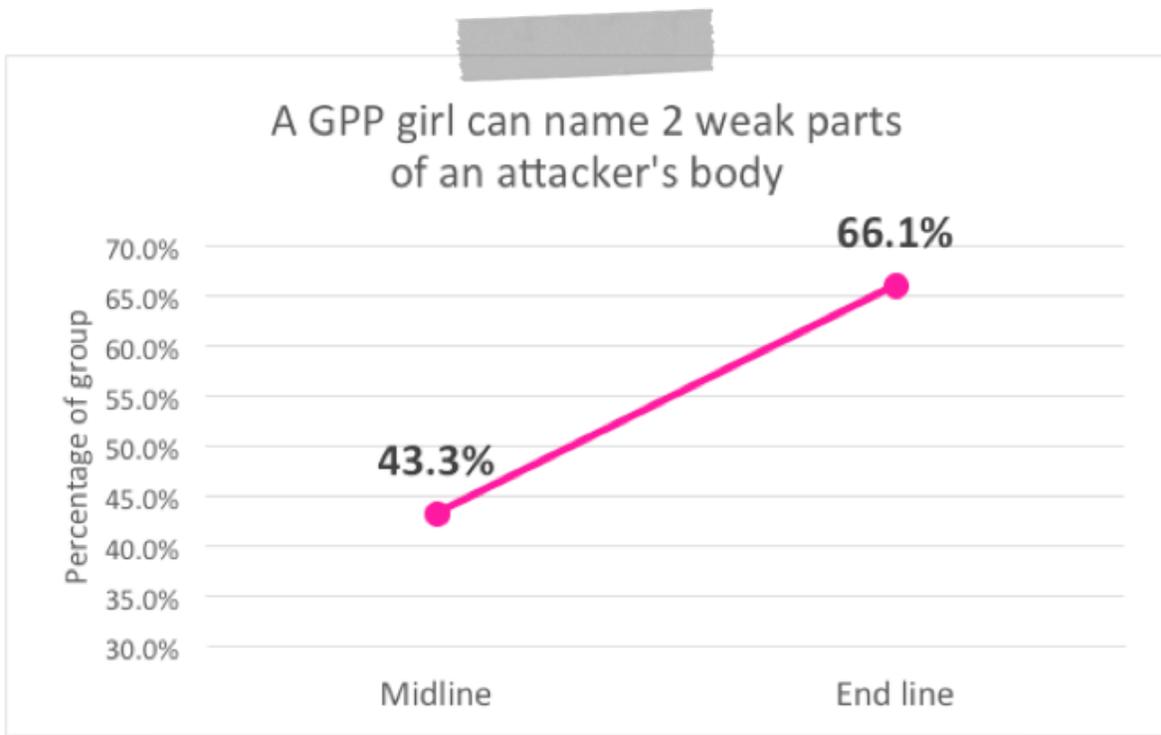
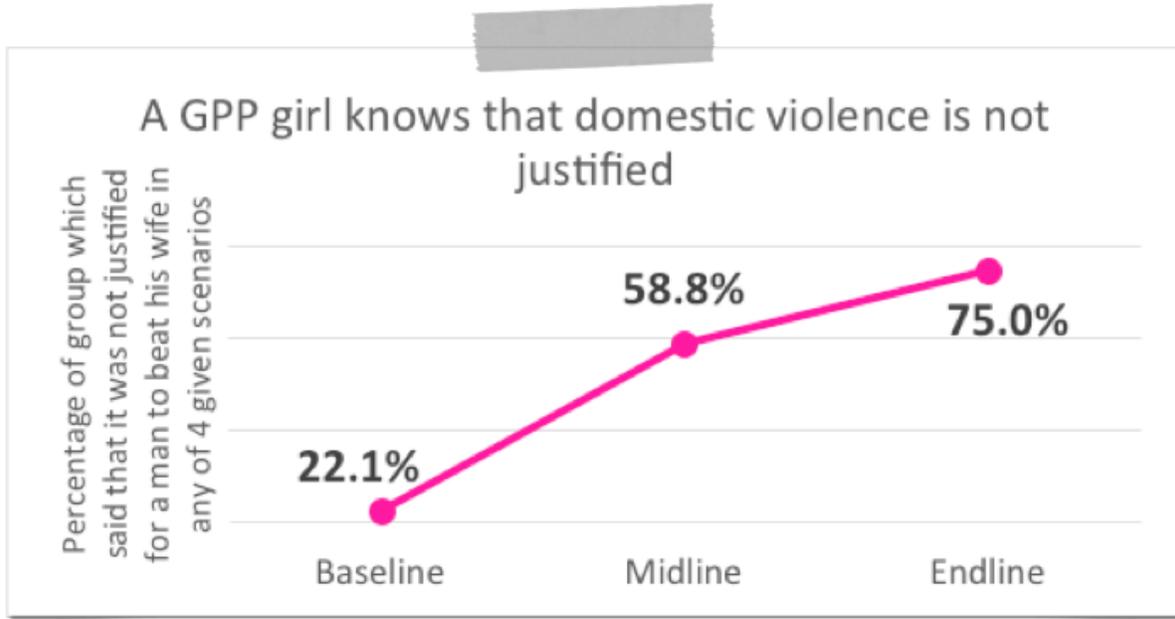
Girl Power Project Girls know about their bodies:



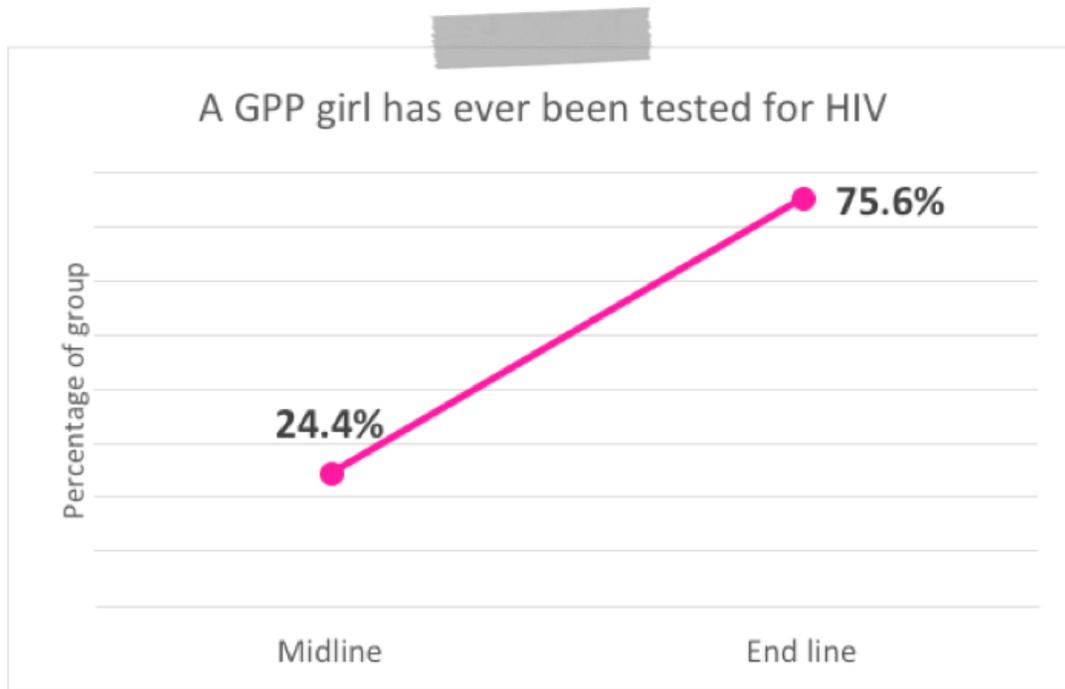
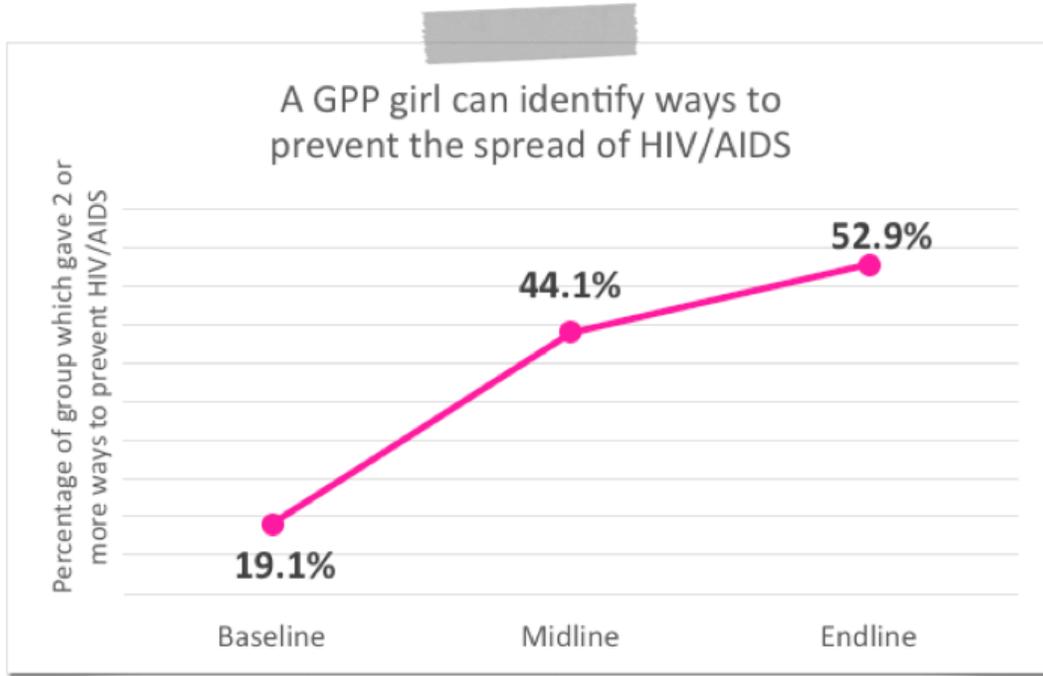
Girl Power Project girls are better equipped to avoid sexual assault:



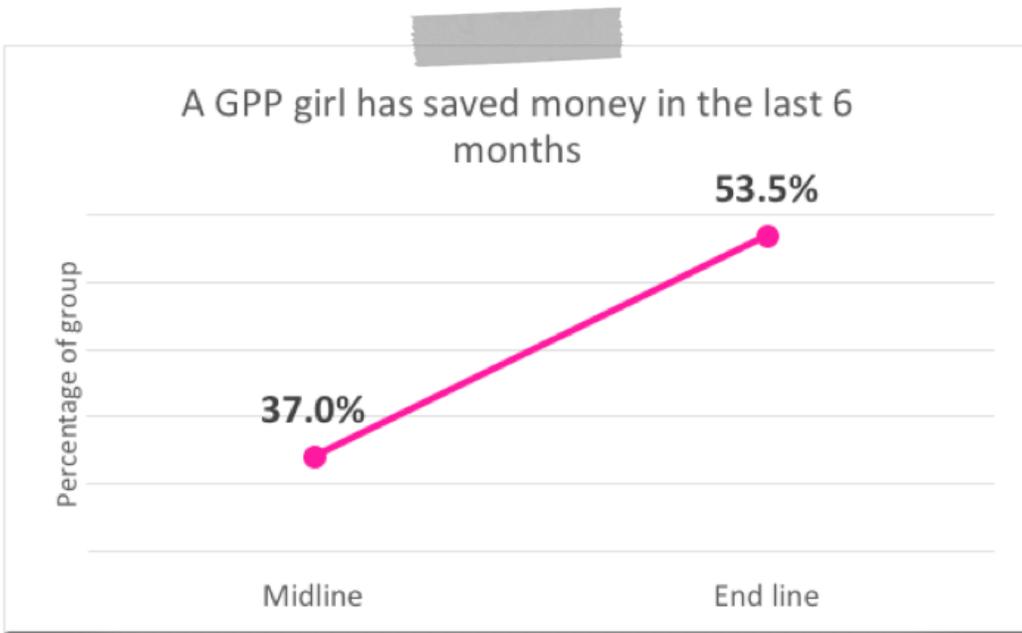
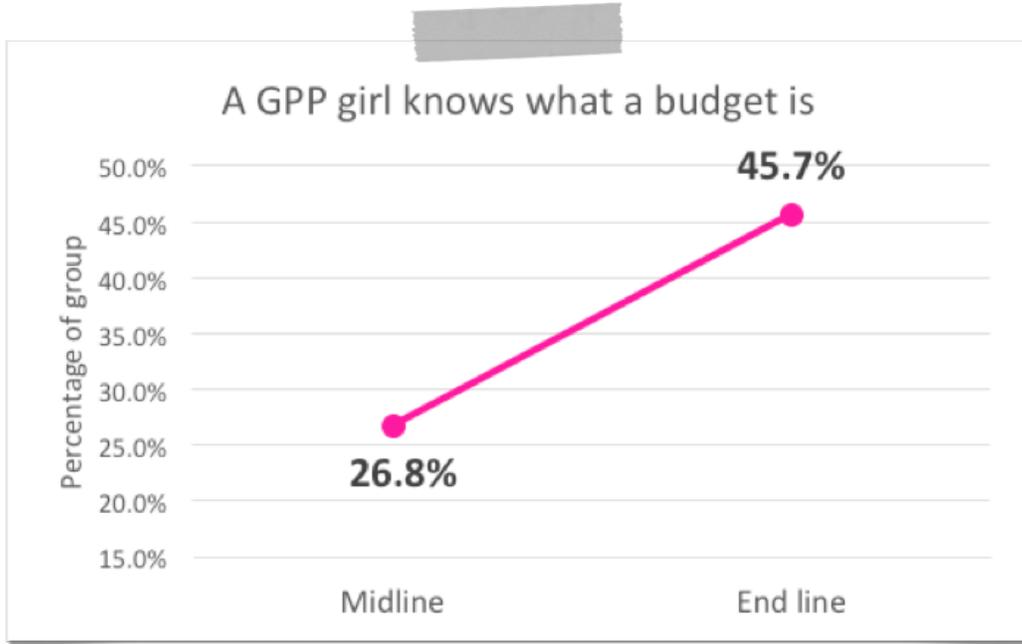
Girl Power Project girls know that violence is wrong and they know how to protect themselves:



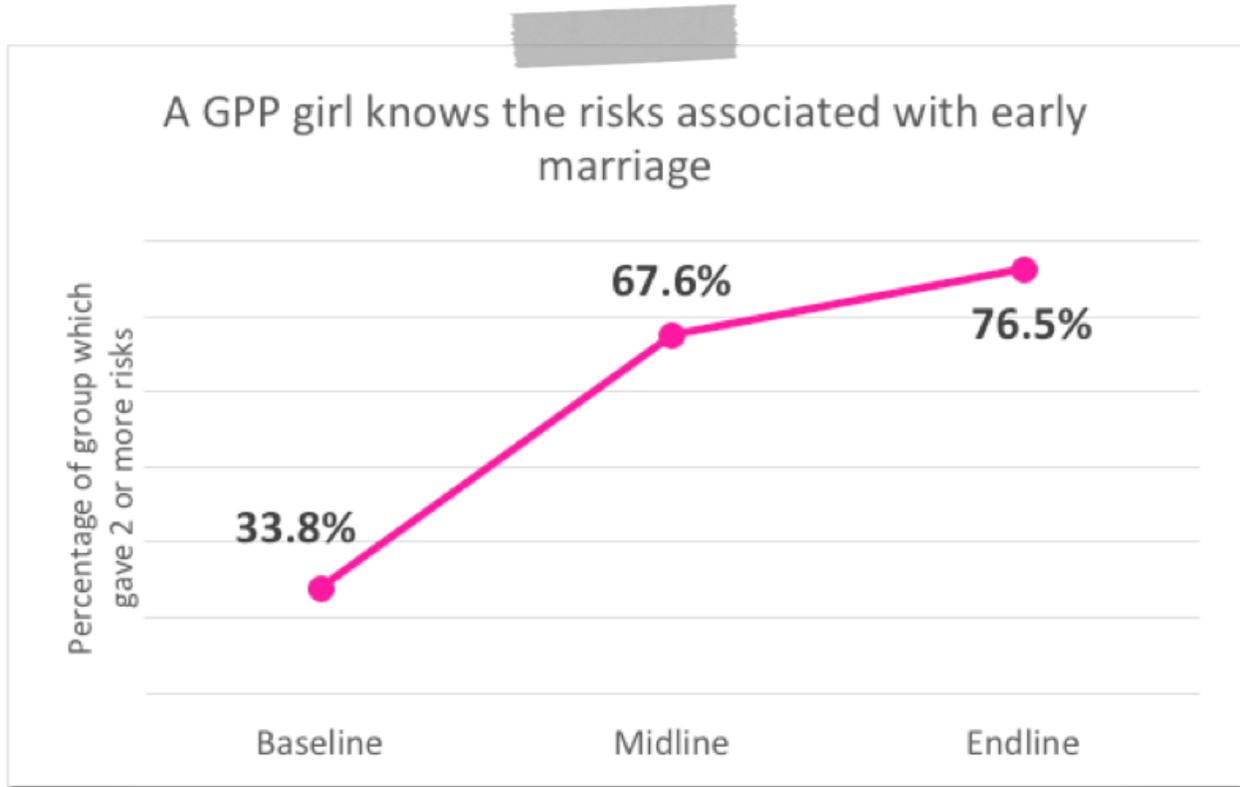
Girl Power Project Girls are better equipped to avoid disease and they know their HIV status:



Girl Power Girls are financially literate and they have savings:



Girl Power Project girls are better equipped to avoid forced child marriage:



Two professors (one from Texas A&M University and one from Sam Houston State University) who are experts in M&E (Qualitative & Quantitative), reviewed the research process, analysis and findings of JLMC’s internal evaluation and corroborated the validity of the results.

JLMC learned many lessons from the internal evaluation and immediately began implementing recommendations to further strengthen GPP programming. Moreover, JLMC is carrying out a continuous longitudinal study of 25 randomly selected girls from the Girl Power Project. These girls were selected in 2015 and will be followed for several more years, so JLMC can measure whether or not they have stayed in school, avoided early marriage, pregnancy and disease.

JLMC gathered this group in August 2018 to collect the third round of data on this cohort. Thus far, the outcomes for these girls are looking promising.

### **Texas A&M External Research Findings on Impact of Girl Power Project on Communities:**

In order to further explore the impact of the Girl Power Project at the community level, Just Like My Child Foundation (JLMC) and Texas A&M University (TAMU) partnered to evaluate how engaging and empowering community members with knowledge of human rights and children's rights can enhance the success of the Girl Power Project. For a girl to live an empowered life, her community -- parents, teachers, law enforcement, government officials, men and boys -- must be supportive and actively involved.

Four post-graduate students from TAMU – two from the Bush School of Government and Public Service and two from TAMU's Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications were interned in Luwero, Uganda during the summer of 2018 to evaluate whether engaging adults and boys in the Girl Power Project contributes to improved conditions for a girl to live an empowered life. This investigation focused on the resulting relationships that a girl has both in and outside her home - with her neighbors, school teachers, local police/authorities, adult role models, and other members in her community.

The students conducted 143 interviews with 7 stakeholder groups (including JLMC staff; Community Legal Volunteers; Girl Power Advocates; Teachers; Parents; Partners; and Untrained Others) in 17 communities and collected 2,669 responses.

The Texas A&M study revealed Girl Power Project community impact as evidenced by an increase in:

- community awareness and advocacy for girl's education
- community knowledge and agency to respond to violence against girls
- community awareness and dialogue on women's equality
- assumption of responsibility by community leaders with regards to girl's issues
- range of gender roles within the community
- capacity of community members to parent their children

**Conclusion:**

With these internal and external monitoring and evaluation outcomes demonstrating that the GPP is effective in empowering girls and their communities, JLMC is now poised and committed to identifying and working with strategic partners to support the scaling up of the Girl Power Project, a proven and sustainable model of success for girls empowerment.