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## Cash Transfers in Raqqa Governorate, Syria *Changes Over Time in Women's Experiences of Violence & Wellbeing*



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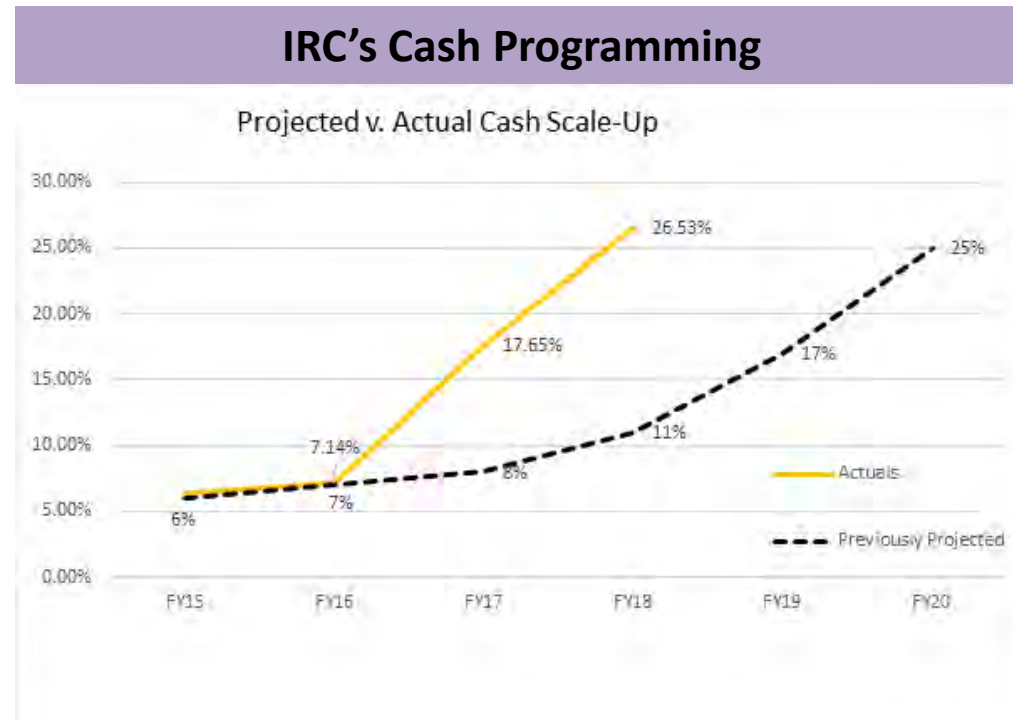
Department  
for International  
Development

# Cash in Emergencies



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- Increased use of cash transfers in emergencies
- While largely positive in low and middle income countries, evidence is mixed on whether cash / economic empowerment reduces or exacerbates risks for women



(Buller, et al, 2018. A mixed-method review of cash transfers and intimate partner violence in low and middle income countries. UNICEF)

# Study aim



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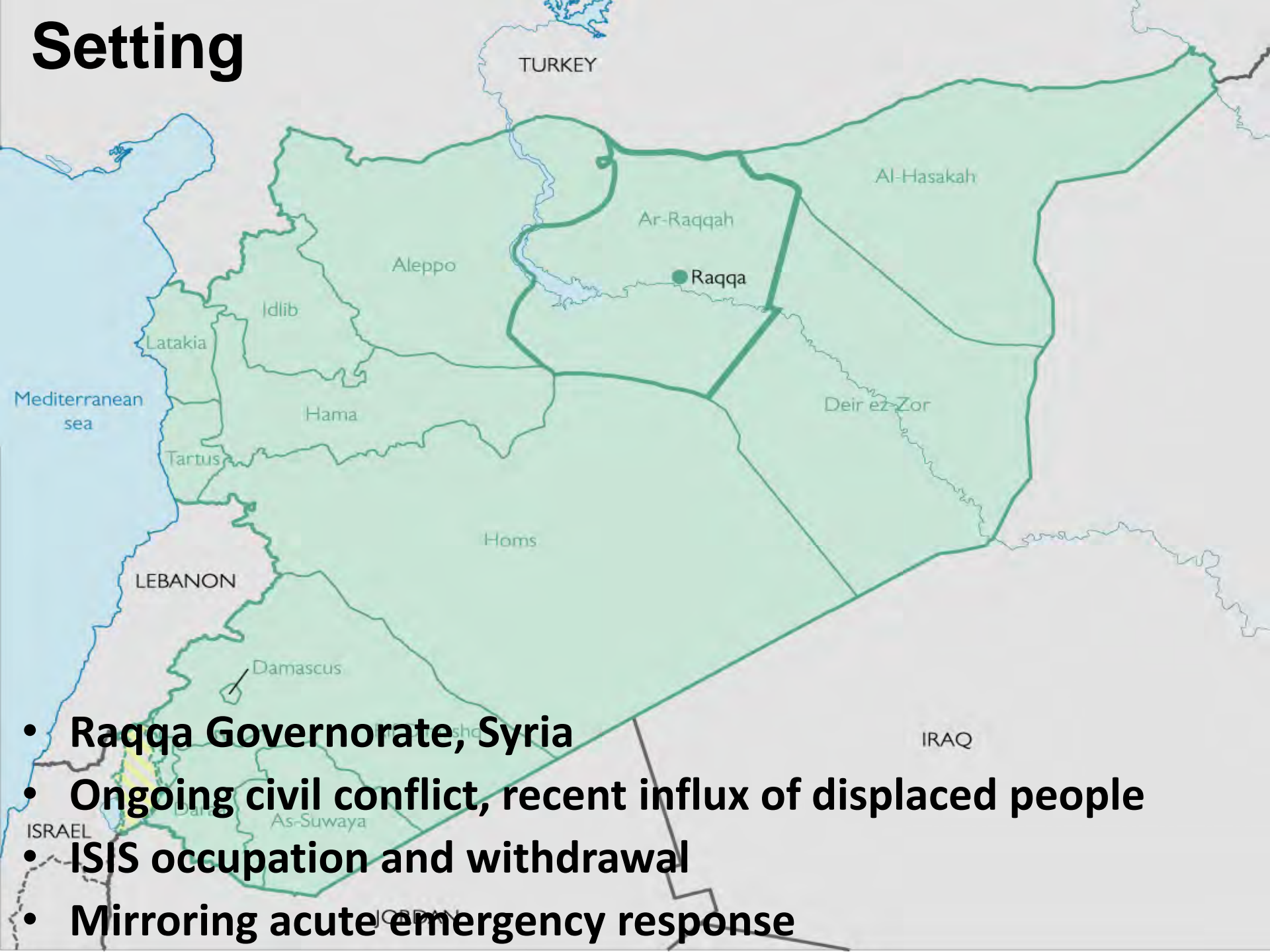
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What is the perceived impact of cash transfers on women's experiences of violence, negative coping (including sexual exploitation), and wellbeing in an acute emergency setting?



# Setting



- **Raqqa Governorate, Syria**
- **Ongoing civil conflict, recent influx of displaced people**
- **ISIS occupation and withdrawal**
- **Mirroring acute emergency response**

# Cash program



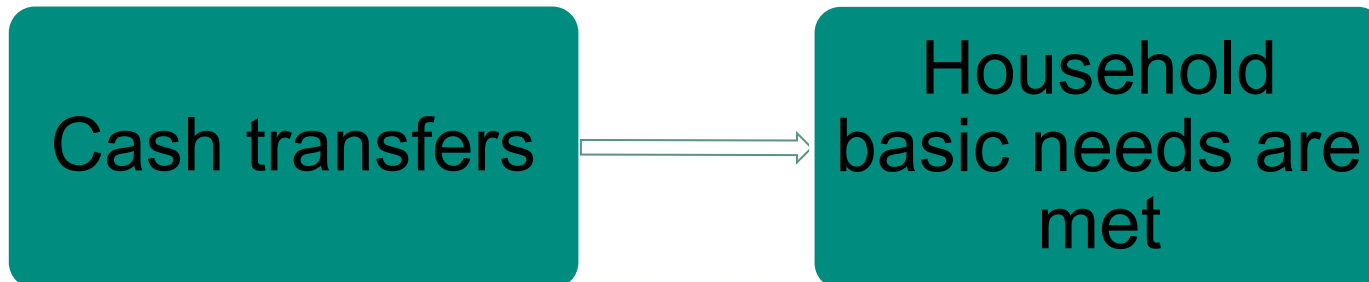
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3 month multi-purpose, unconditional cash

\$76 / month

Households targeted based on vulnerability

Cash distributed to head of household (man or woman)



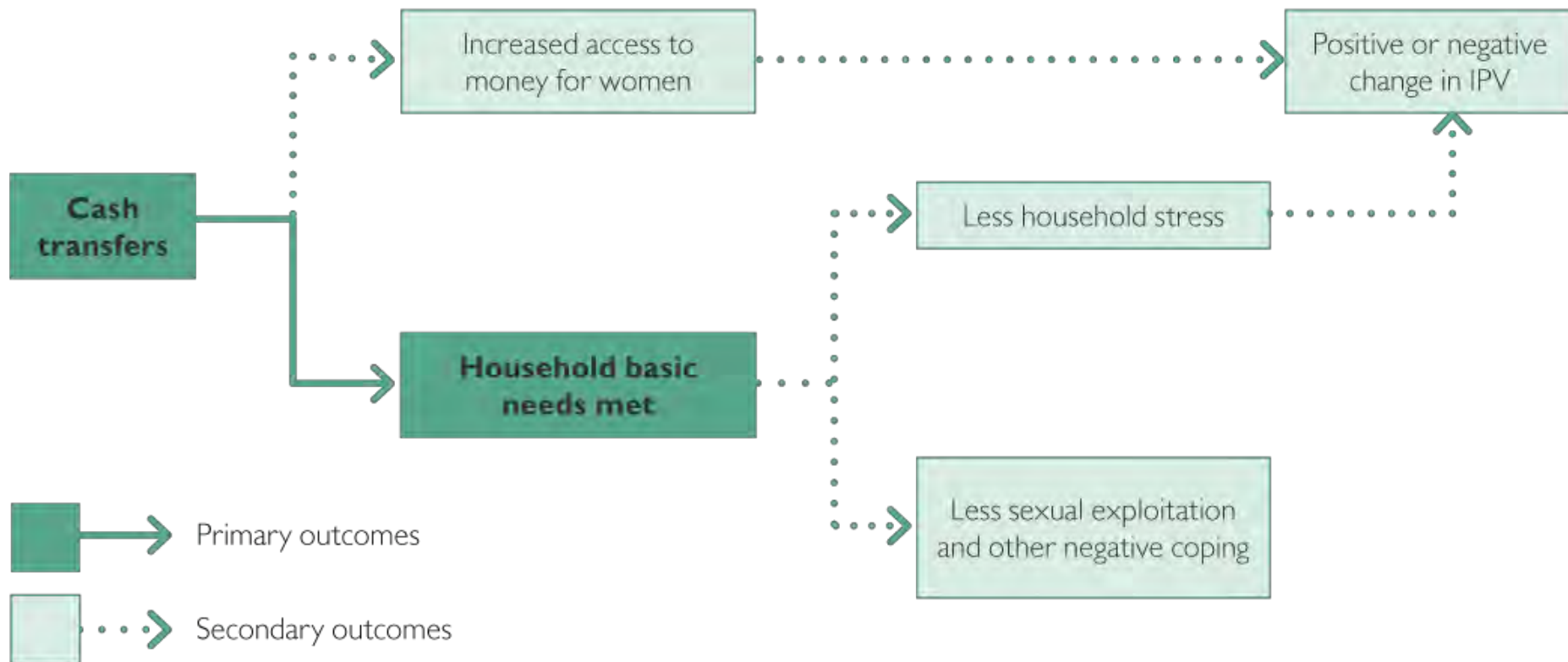
# Theory of Change



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# Study design



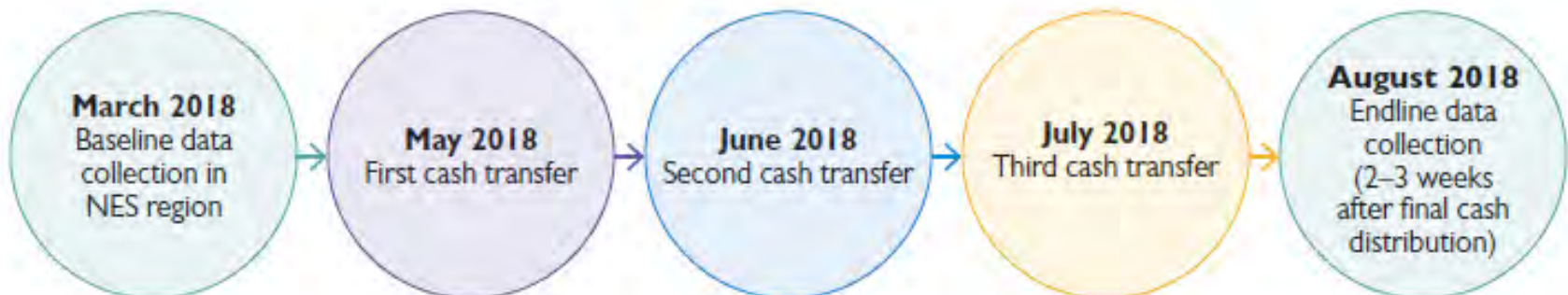
Quantitative pre-post test with in-depth interviews at endline

- N=456 women at endline (10.9% attrition)

Data collection design and approach:

- ACASI for sensitive economic and protection related items
- Sites selected ensuring the availability of VAWG services

## Timeline of data collection and cash transfers



# The Context





# High Levels of Traumatic Experiences & Pervasive Negative Coping



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- **9 out of 10** ever displaced
- **1 in 4** have had a family member killed in crisis
- **1 in 5** have had a family member gone missing

“We ran away to the middle of nowhere, no food, no water. We didn’t know what was happening. I went looking for my children and I couldn’t find them.”

**Married woman**

“[My husband] was killed in an air strike, he was killed with four of my sons. They pulled me out of the rubble with my son and my daughter after an hour.”

**Widowed woman**

# Low Status of Women



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- **55%** married women ever experienced any IPV at baseline

I was free  
before and they came and choked us.  
I spent my time at home and never  
went out."

**Married woman**

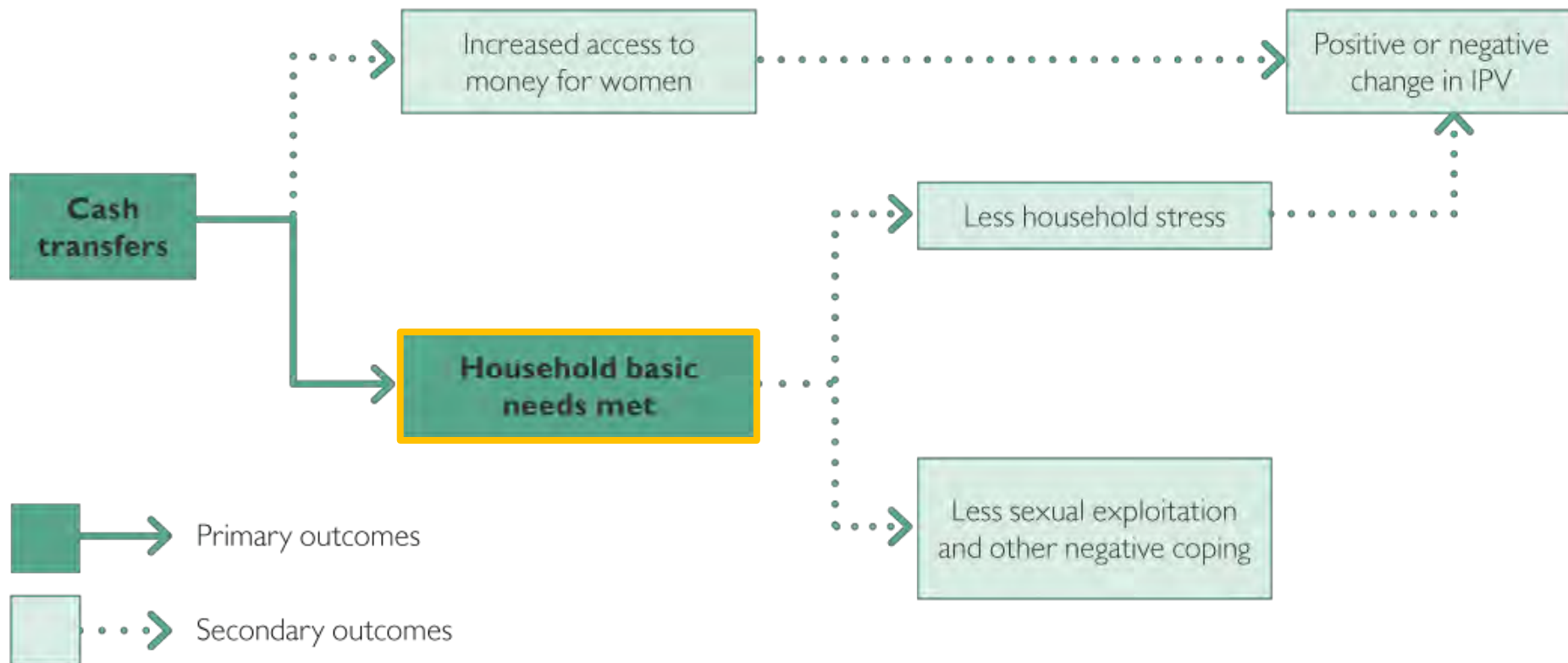
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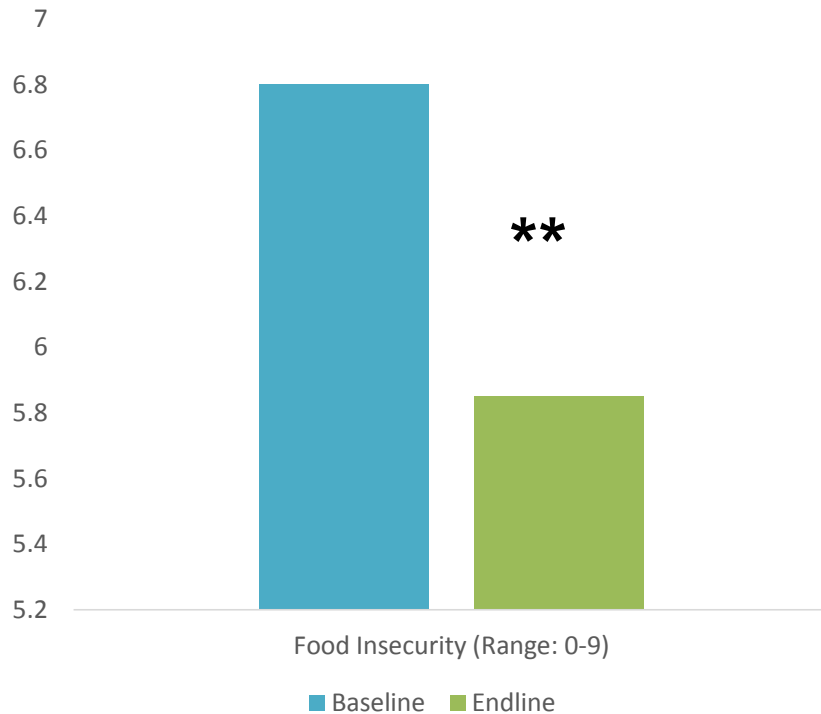
# Food Insecurity Decreases



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“We got rid of debts. I'm happy because the shop owners are sure that we are going to pay later. I can buy food, I take from here and pay off there. Till now they are giving us groceries.”

**Married woman**

# Spending Habits



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Paying back  
debt



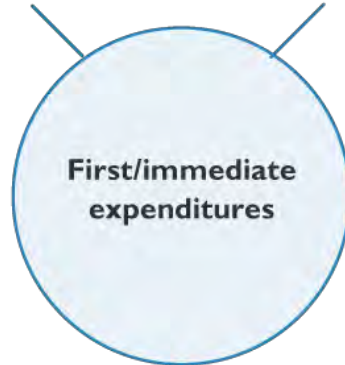
Medical  
expenses



Financial  
savings



Future medical  
spending (savings)

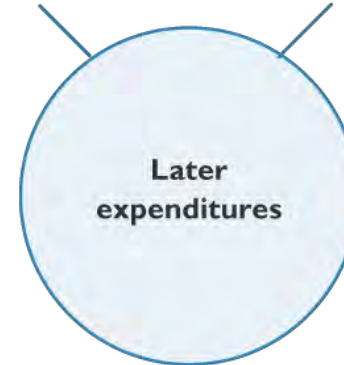


**First/immediate  
expenditures**



Basic needs

(food, water, shelter and clothing) – in particular,  
children's basic needs and clothing



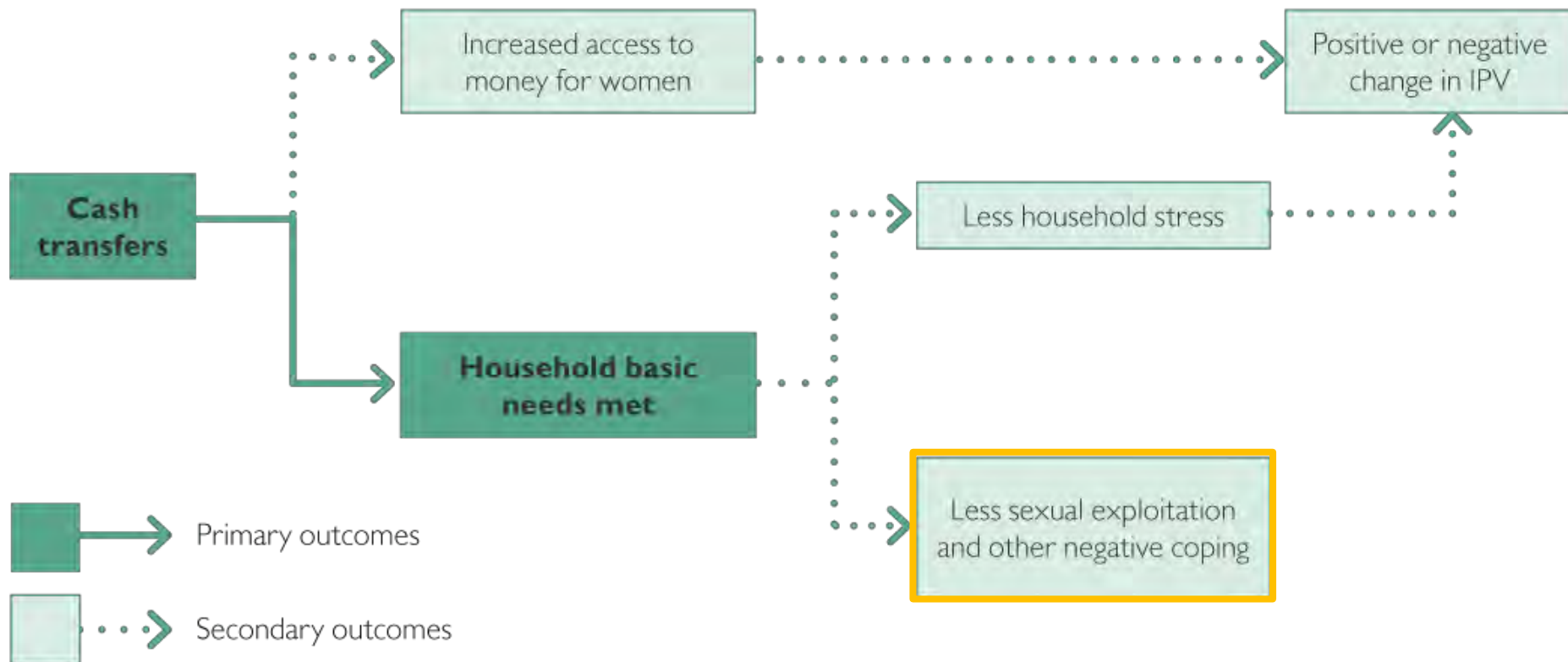
**Later  
expenditures**



Personal expenses

(household appliances, adult's clothing)

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# Overall Reductions in Negative Coping



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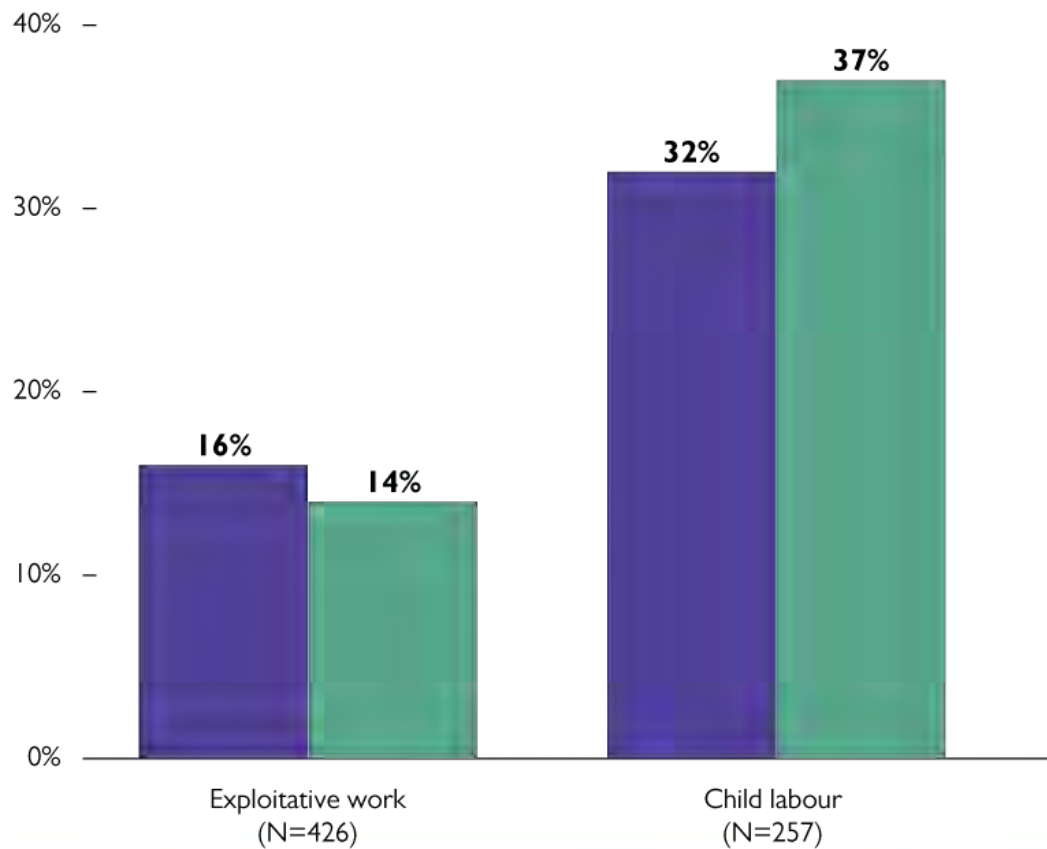
# No change in exploitative employment-related negative coping



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"After the cash stops, my daughter will go back to work, and God will help us."

Widowed woman



# Sexual exploitation and abuse



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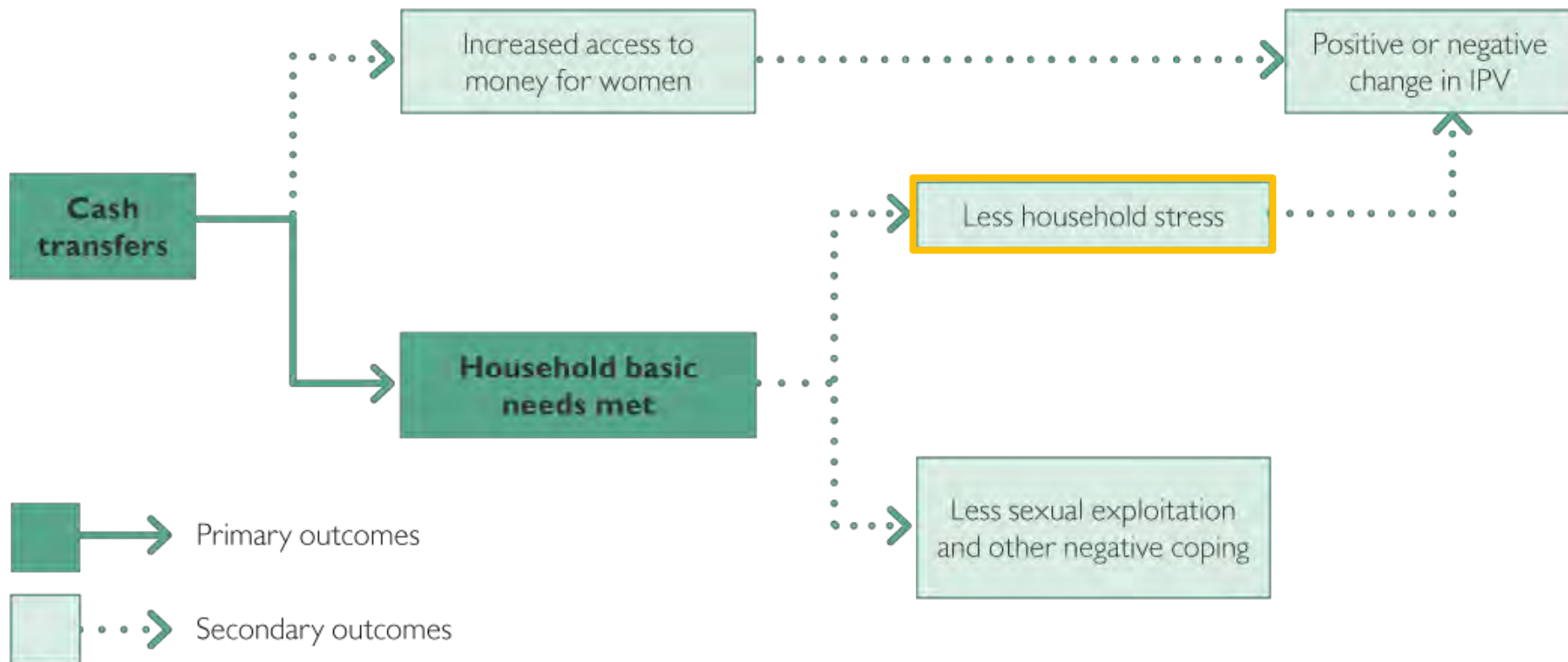
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4.7% ever transactional sex at baseline

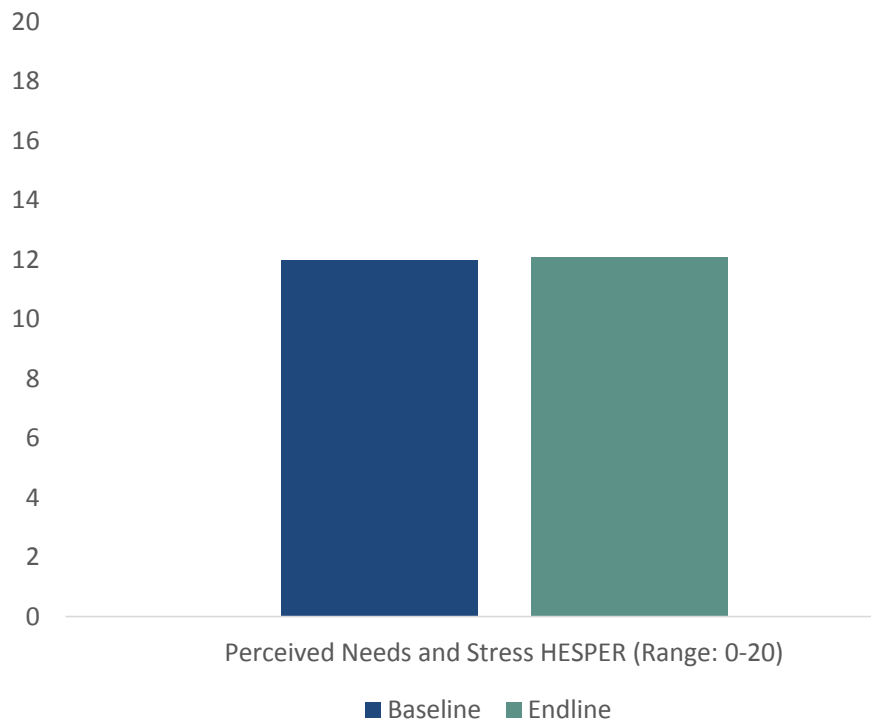
No endline data due to security/access issues



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# Perceived Household Stress & Needs Do Not Change



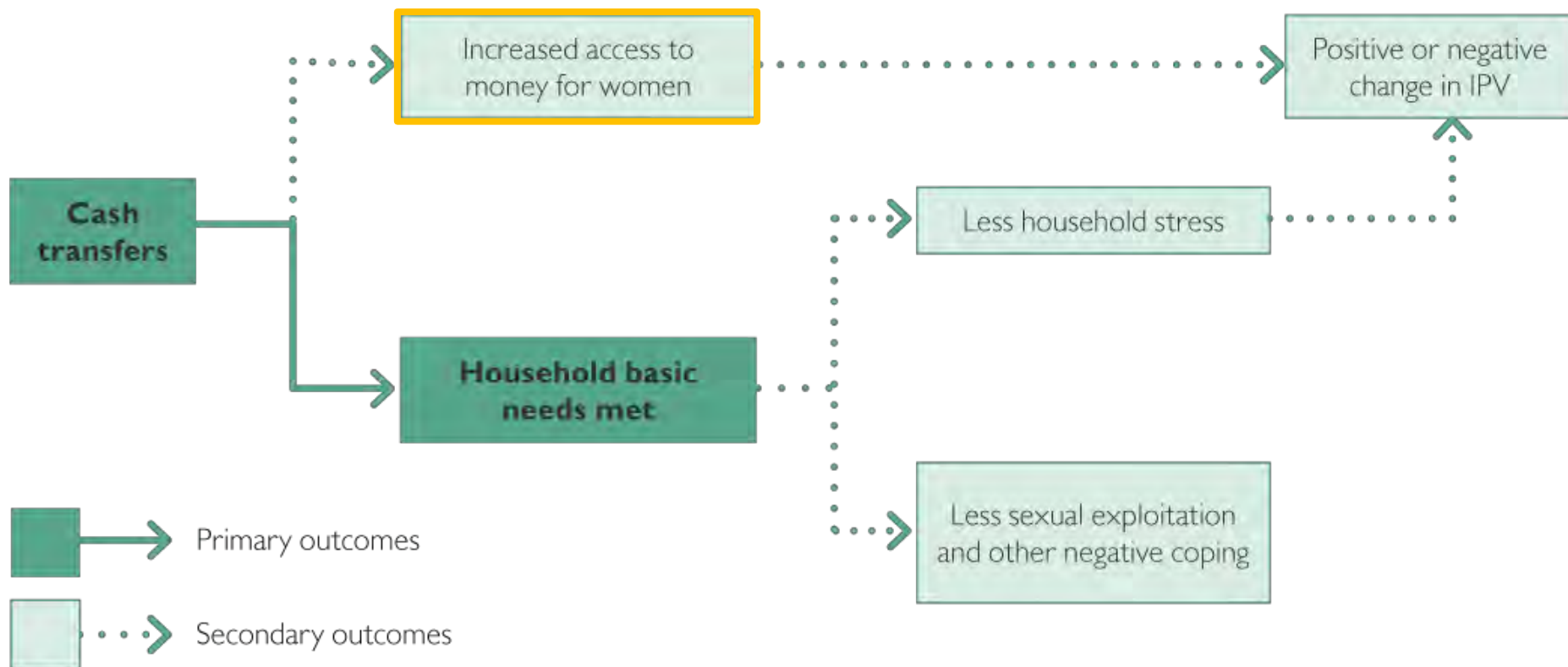
“I was sad when I knew that this was the last payment, because it was useful.”

**Widowed woman**

“I didn't think yet what I'm going to do when the project ends. I'll work in the field from the early morning to the evening, and I'll get 500 liras. I will suffer and struggle again.”

**Married woman**

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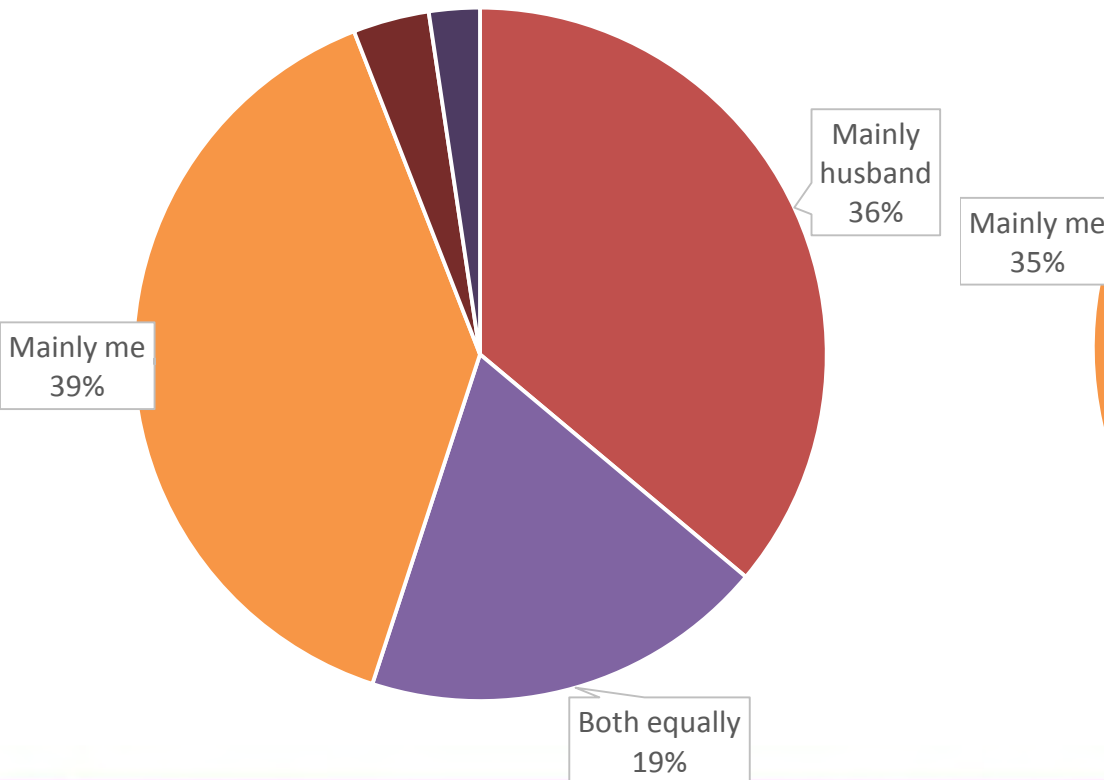
# Trending Towards More Joint Decision-Making for Married Women



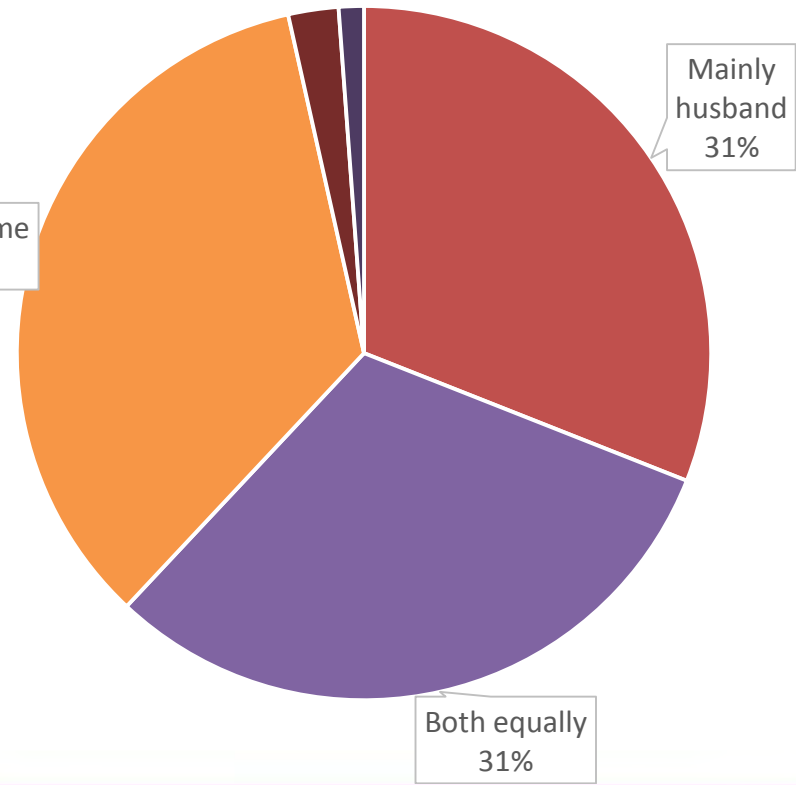
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## Household Item Expenditure Example

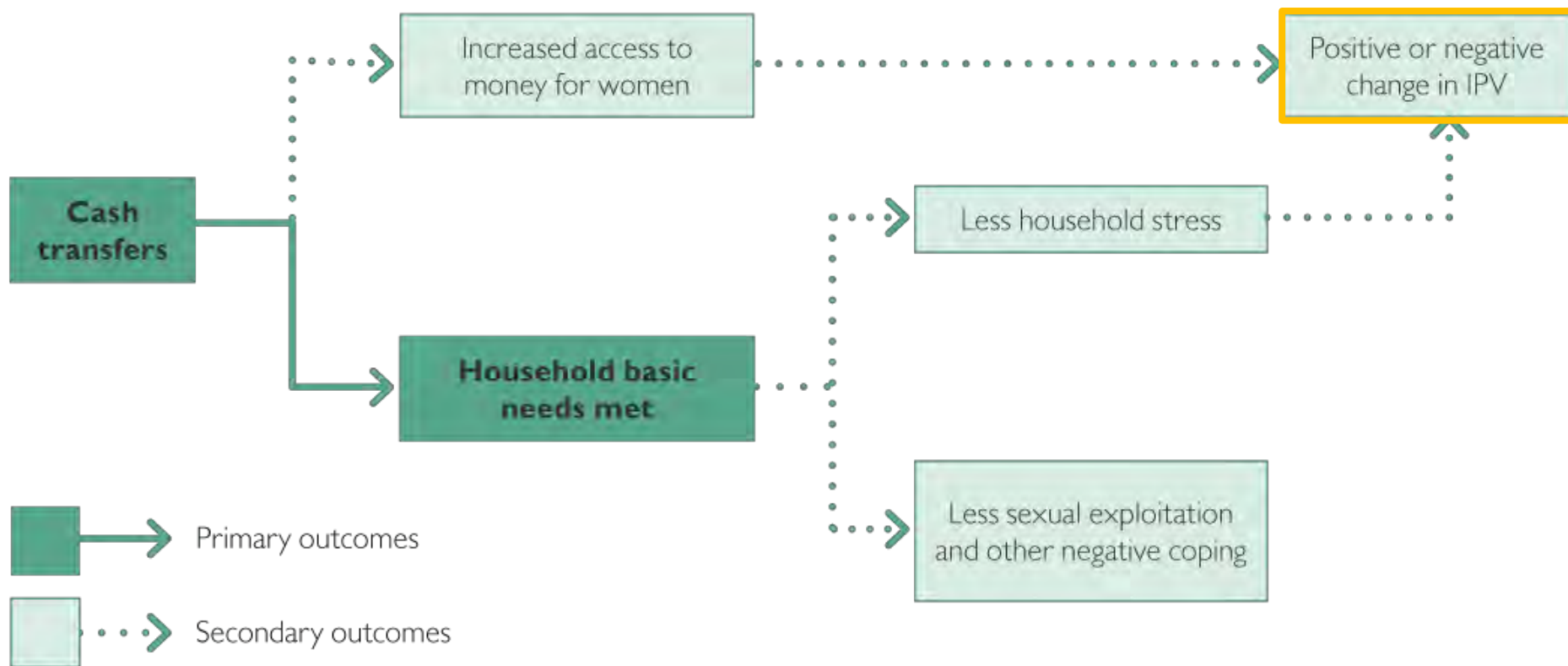
Baseline



Endline



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# Overall Frequency of Past 3 Months Intimate Partner Violence Increases

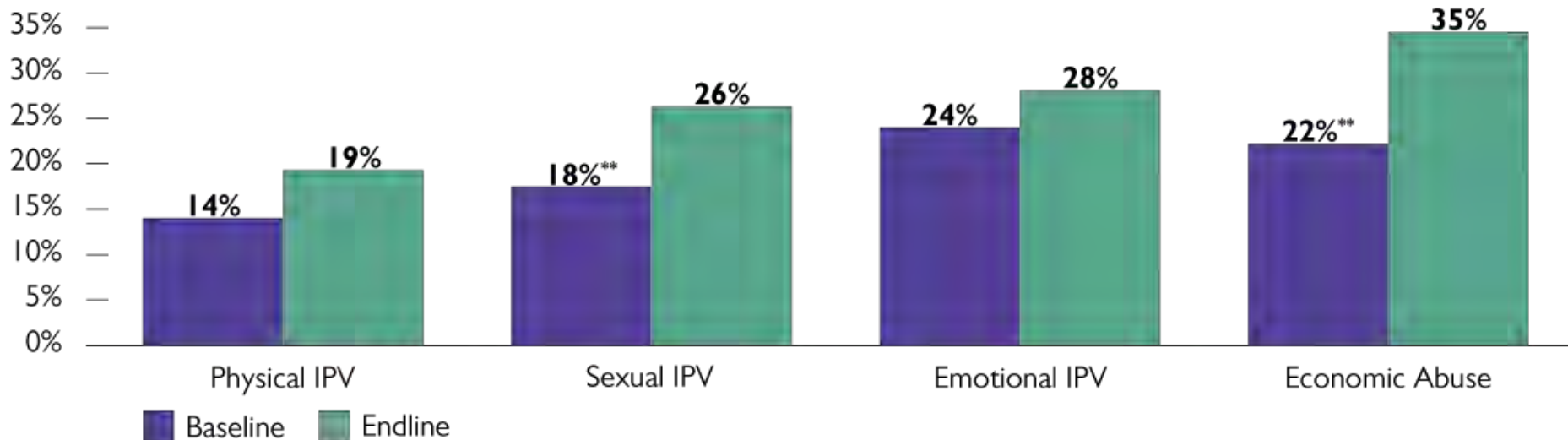
(Married Women = 171)



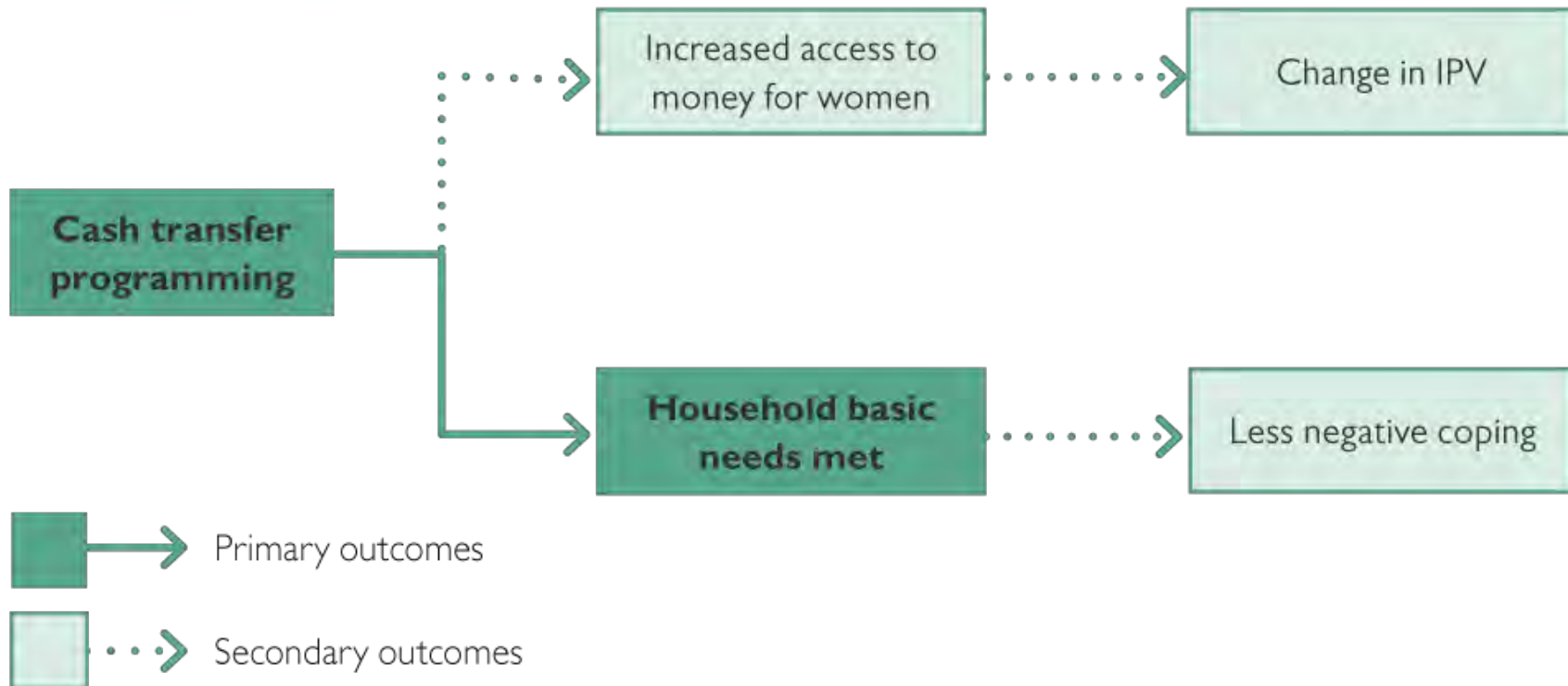
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# Although we cannot confirm causality, our findings actually suggest this framework





# Recommendation #1: Risk Mitigation



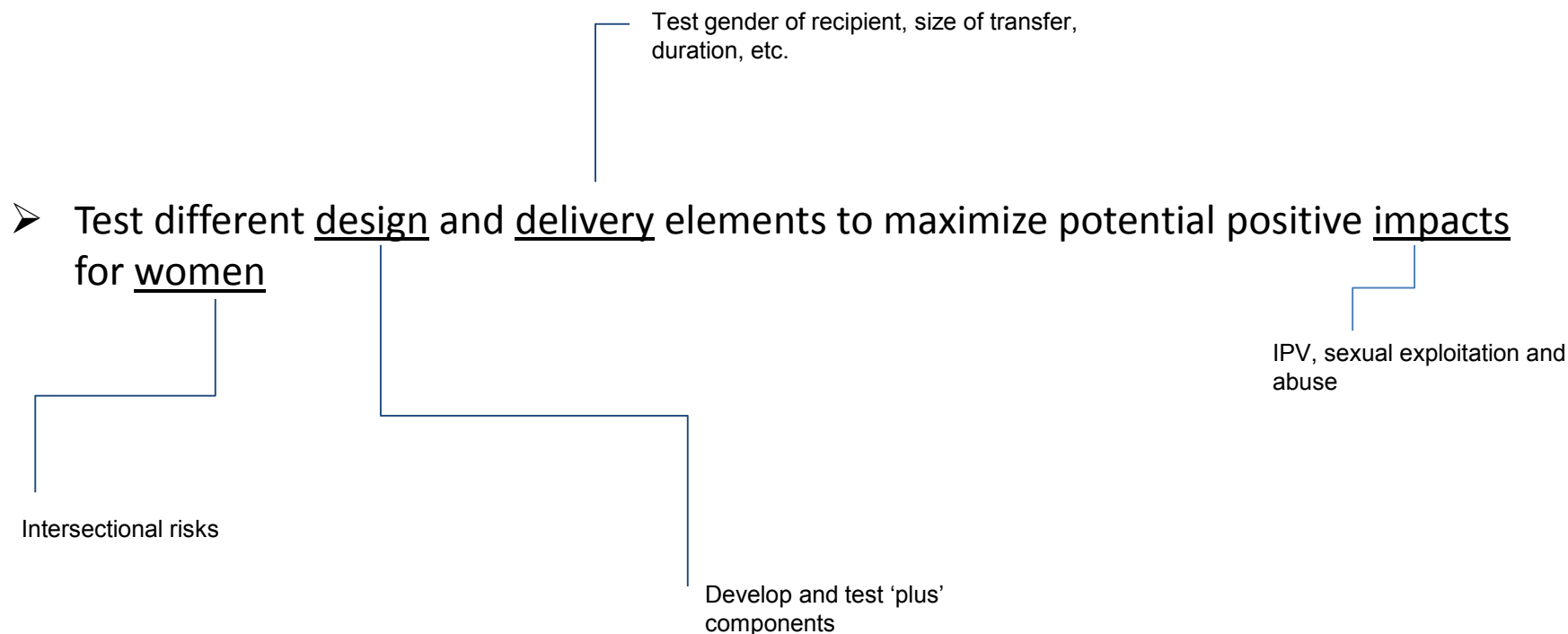
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- Design cash programming to monitor, minimize, and prevent risks to women and girls throughout the cash transfer cycle

Better communicate and develop clear exit strategies

Post-distribution monitoring + referral pathways between cash & VAWG actors

# Recommendation #2: Test Solutions



# Recommendation #3: Scale & Sustainability



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While assessing for contextual realities and feasibility

- Test how to take programming at the early stages of an acute crisis to scale and how best to transition from short term emergency cash to longer term livelihoods opportunities for women

Filling the humanitarian – development / recovery continuum gap



# Thank you



# Trending Towards More Independent Decision-Making for Unmarried Women



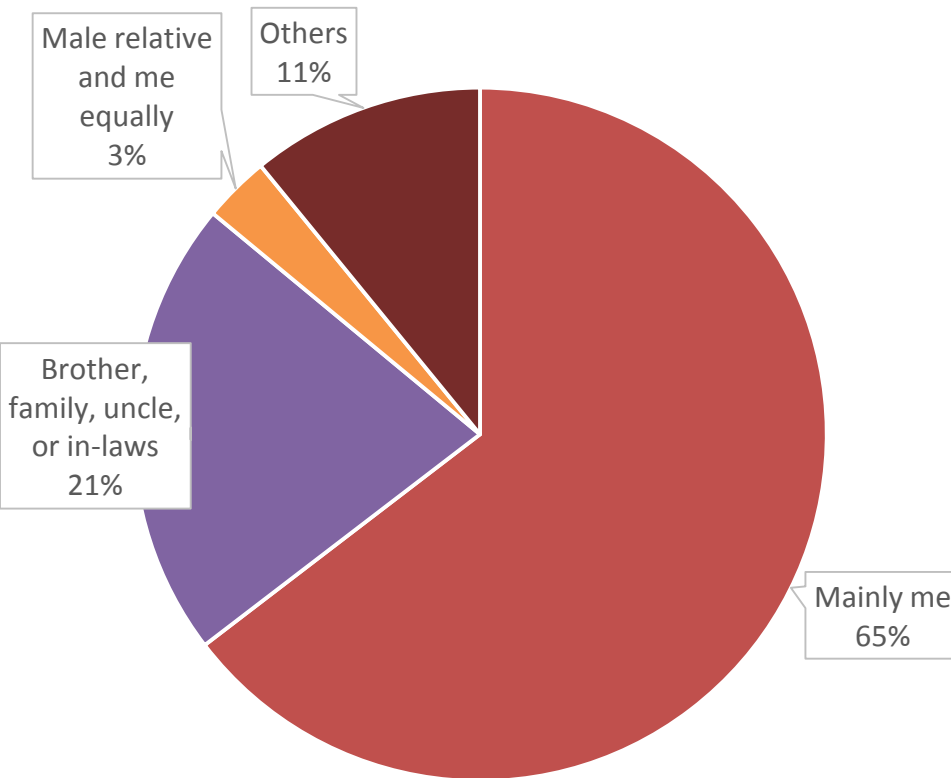
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## Household Item Expenditure Example

Baseline



Endline

