

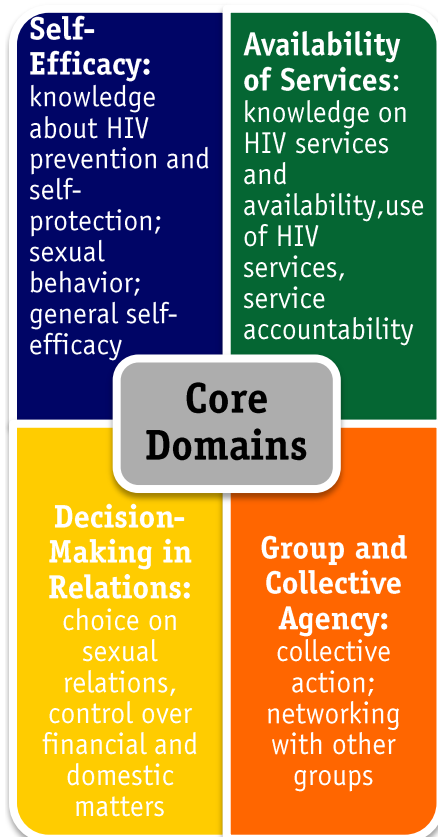
Phase III: Gender, Power and Sex

Strategic Impact Inquiry Research Summary

Overview: The Strategic Impact Inquiry, Phase III sought to improve the ways that HIV policy and programs understand the gendered power dynamics that drive women's vulnerabilities to HIV. The study aimed to:

- Explore women's vulnerability to HIV, empowerment and their relationship.
- Assess how CARE projects, particularly through **solidarity groups** and **influencing power brokers**, shape women's empowerment and their HIV vulnerability.
- Inform HIV policy and programs on the realities of gender, sex and vulnerability.

In order to allow comparison across 6 countries, teams collected data on a common set of 'core' indicators.



In addition, each team developed its own research design relevant to their unique contexts and programs.

Methodology:

STAGE I

empowerment, HIV vulnerability

- **Methods:** Focus group discussions, key informant interviews, secondary data review (surveys, reports, audits, policies)

STAGE II

- Gather data on women's empowerment and vulnerability, triangulate Stage I information, identify Stage III interviewees
- **Methods:** Purposive sampling of project participants and other stakeholders, semi-structured interviews (structured and open-ended questions)

STAGE III

- Explore relationships between project, women's empowerment and HIV risk
- **Methods:** In depth interviews, key informant interviews (staff, service providers, donors, public sector officials, police, etc.), secondary data review (policies, reports of other local projects)

The SII framework was designed to balance local learning priorities with global, which may have limited the study's comparative analysis, but ensured its relevance.

Key Terms:

Women's

Empowerment: The SII's framework for empowerment has three key dimensions: structure, agency and relations. Using this framework, the SII explores how women define empowerment in their own lives.

Vulnerability to HIV: This term describes a cumulative measure of individual, community, social, legal, political, cultural and economic factors that interact to impact the likelihood of a person either contracting or transmitting HIV.

Relationship between women's empowerment and vulnerability to HIV: Quantitative and qualitative patterns suggesting how women's empowerment interacts with vulnerability to HIV.

Context: Factors within the environment that affect whether or not a woman feels she has choice, whether she will exercise it, and what outcome results from her actions. This can include:

- Economic,
- Cultural/ Social,
- Political/Policy-related,
- Legal,
- Systems-related, or
- Normative.

Maintaining Quality:

All SII teams adhered to the following quality guidelines:

- Data collectors were external or CARE staff, mainly working on a separate project.
- Preliminary analysis took place during data collection through daily debriefing.
- Country analyses were sent to ICRW who synthesized key findings across the six countries.
- Buddies were assigned to each research team to provide ongoing technical support.