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# The Impact of a Graduation Program on Livelihoods in Refugee and Host Communities in Uganda

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New Directions in Graduation Research  
Dec 4 2020

# Motivation and research questions

- Promising earlier results of the “Graduation” approach in a number of countries on a range of outcomes
- How does the approach work in a refugee population in Uganda?
- Can a group-coaching work as effectively (or better) as individual coaching?
  - Pros: cheaper, social cohesion, information sharing, peer encouragement, group economic activity, peer pressure
  - Cons: less individual attention, potential negative group dynamics/inequality
- How critical is the asset transfer for the success of the program?

# Context and sample

- Location: Kamwenge refugee settlement (50% of sample) and surrounding host communities
- Implementation Partner: **AVSI**
- Eligibility: 92% (refugees) / 60% (host) of all households in village
- Target participants: economically active women or youths
- Refugee are from the DRC, on average of 5 years prior
- Existing refugee support: in-kind transfers (\$7/person/month); small plot for house and garden; initial support for shelter/housing; free movement and ability to engage in commerce

# Kamwenge settlement



# Interventions



Intervention

T1: Full program  
individual  
coaching  
(N=2,200)

Consumption support (12 m)	•
VSLA, FFBS, more	•
Individual coaching	•
Group coaching	
Cash “Asset” Transfer	•

Participants are organized in groups of ~25 households

**Value of consumption** support over time, on average: US\$280-320 or **PPP\$840 - PPP\$950**

**Value of “asset” transfer:** US\$300 or **PPP\$880**, ~7 months into the program

Coaching: first weekly, then two-weekly sessions (changed after 6 months, only in individual coaching arm)

# Interventions and experimental design

Intervention	■	■
	T1: Full program individual coaching  (N=2,200)	T2: Full program group coaching  (N=2,200)
Consumption support (12 m)	•	•
VSLA, FFBS, more	•	•
Individual coaching	•	
Group coaching		•
Cash “Asset” Transfer	•	•




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# Interventions and experimental design

Intervention			
	T1: Full program individual coaching  (N=2,200)	T2: Full program group coaching  (N=2,200)	T3: Individual coaching, no asset  (N=2,200)
Consumption support (12 m)	•	•	•
VSLA, FFBS, more	•	•	•
Individual coaching	•		•
Group coaching		•	
Cash “Asset” Transfer	•	•	





Participants are organized in groups of ~25 households

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# Interventions and experimental design

Intervention	 T1: Full program individual coaching (N=2,200)	 T2: Full program group coaching (N=2,200)	 T3: Individual coaching, no asset (N=2,200)	 Control (in treatment villages) (N=2,200)
Consumption support (12 m)	•	•	•	
VSLA, FFBS, more	•	•	•	
Individual coaching	•		•	
Group coaching		•		
Cash “Asset” Transfer	•	•		

Participants are organized in groups of ~25 households

**Value of consumption** support over time, on average: US\$280-320 or **PPP\$840 - PPP\$950**

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Coaching: first weekly, then two-weekly sessions (changed after 6 months, only in individual coaching arm NOT in group coaching arm)

Randomization into the 4 groups was done within villages at the household level

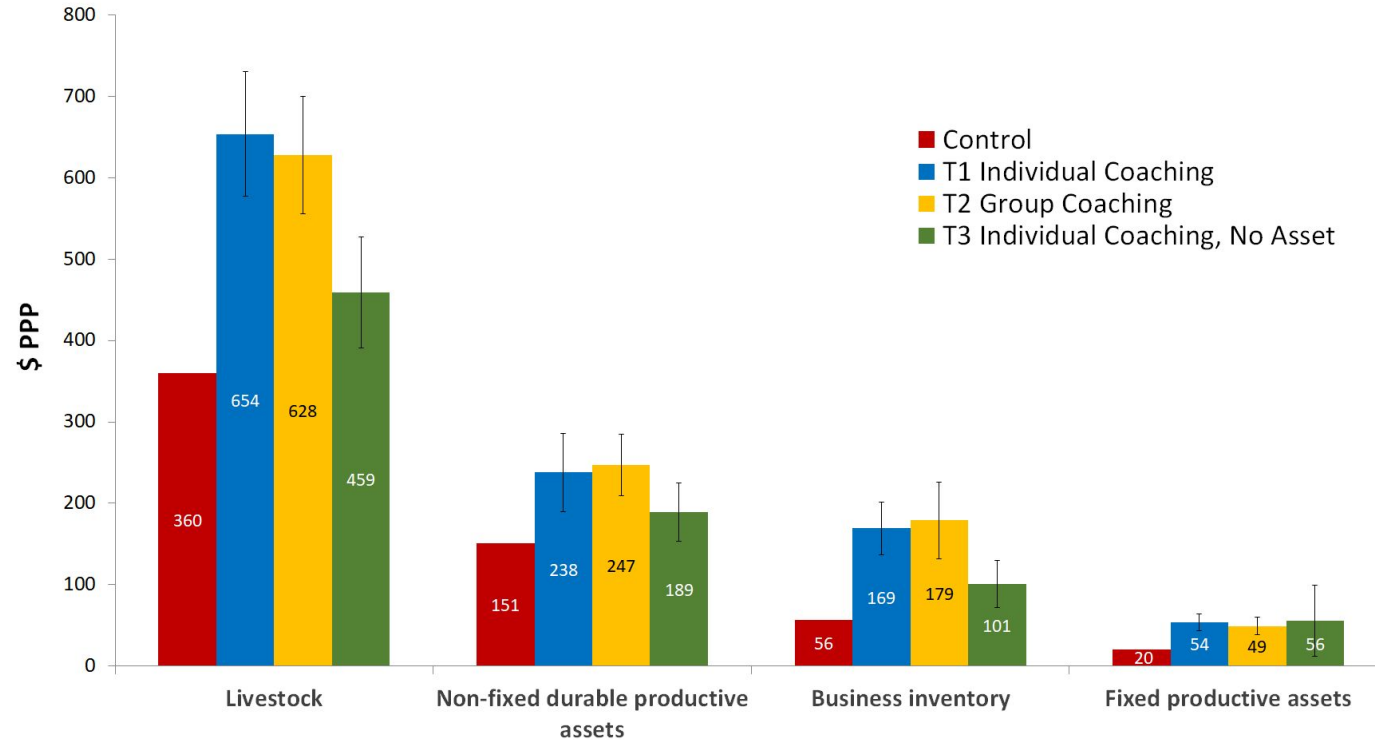
Additional randomization in a prior step: villages into Treatment and Control villages



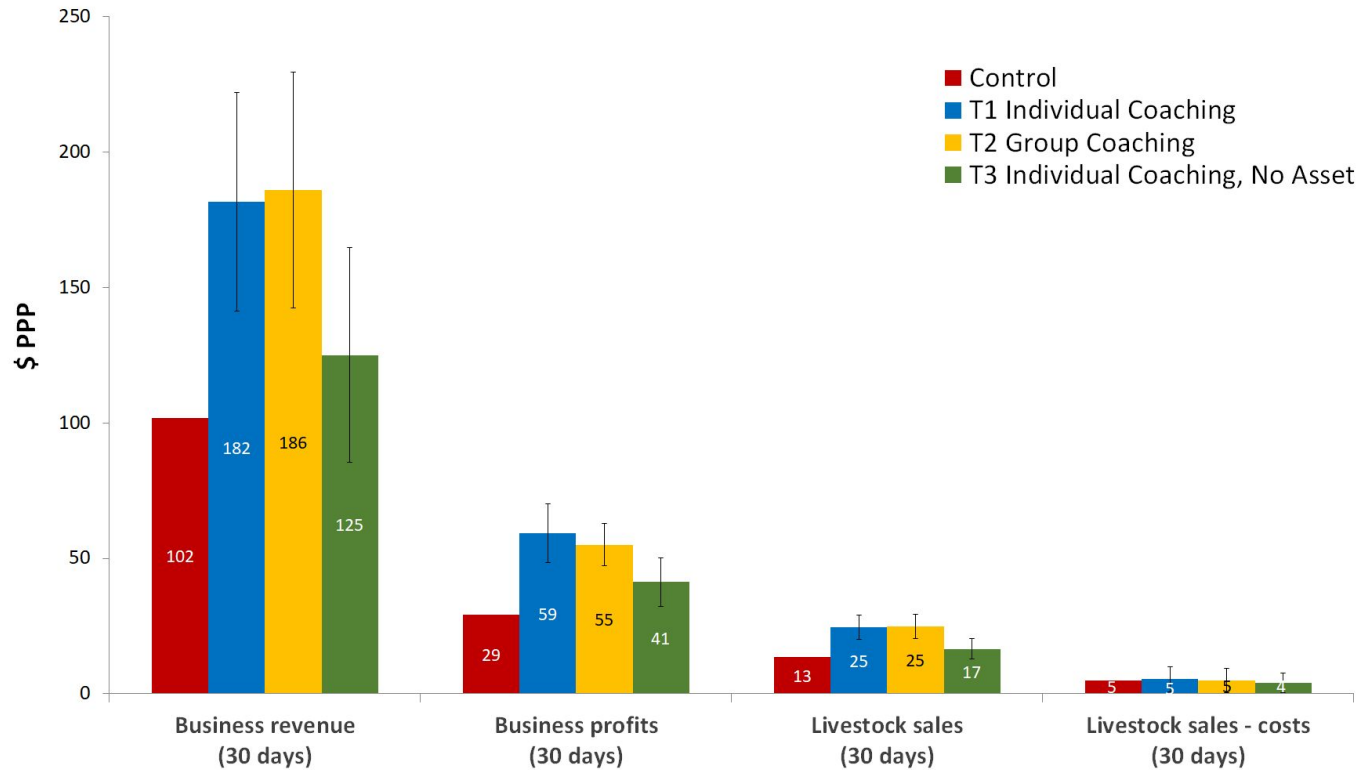
# Data collection

- Baseline
- **Midline**
  - **December 2019 through February 2020**
  - **11-13 months after beginning of the program**
  - **10-12 months after beginning of consumption support**
  - **5-7 months after asset transfer**
  - **96% response rate (N=10,743)**
- Covid Phone survey
  - 6 months after midline, 18 months after start of program
  - 85% response rate among the 64% who had baseline contact info
    - A bit higher attrition for control but overall not correlated with baseline characteristics

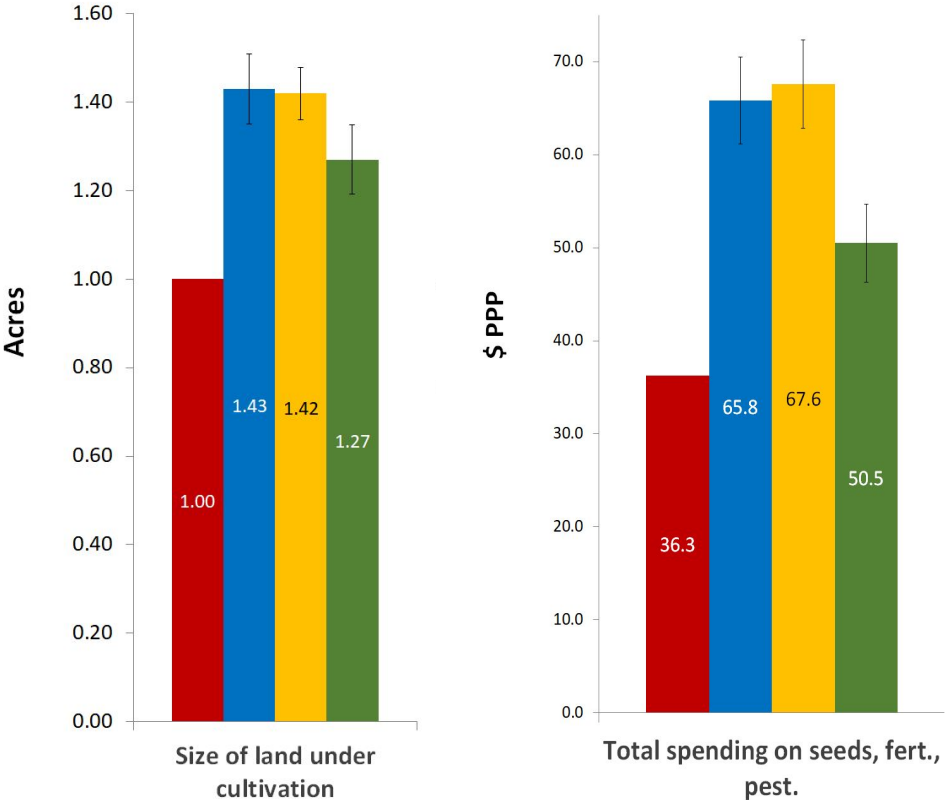
# Increases in the value of productive assets



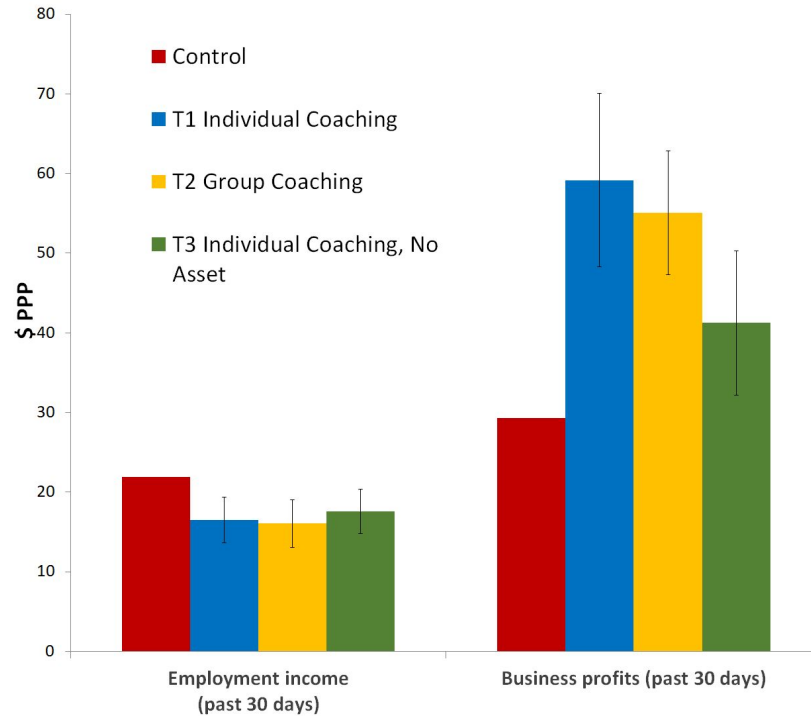
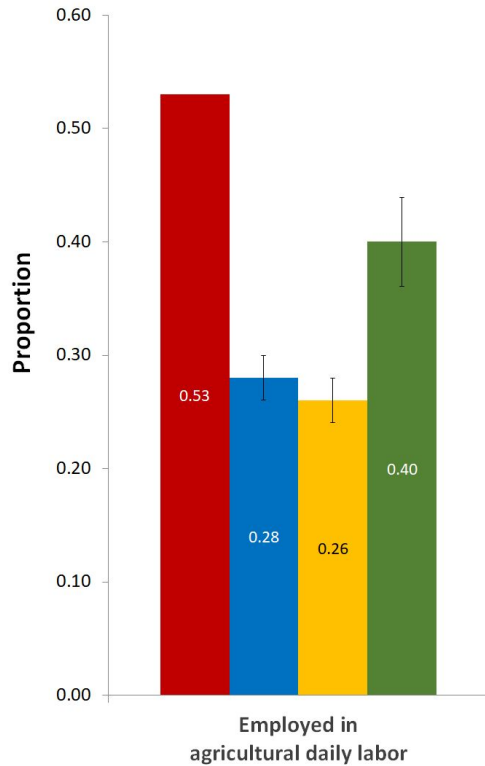
# Increases in economic activity (business, livestock)



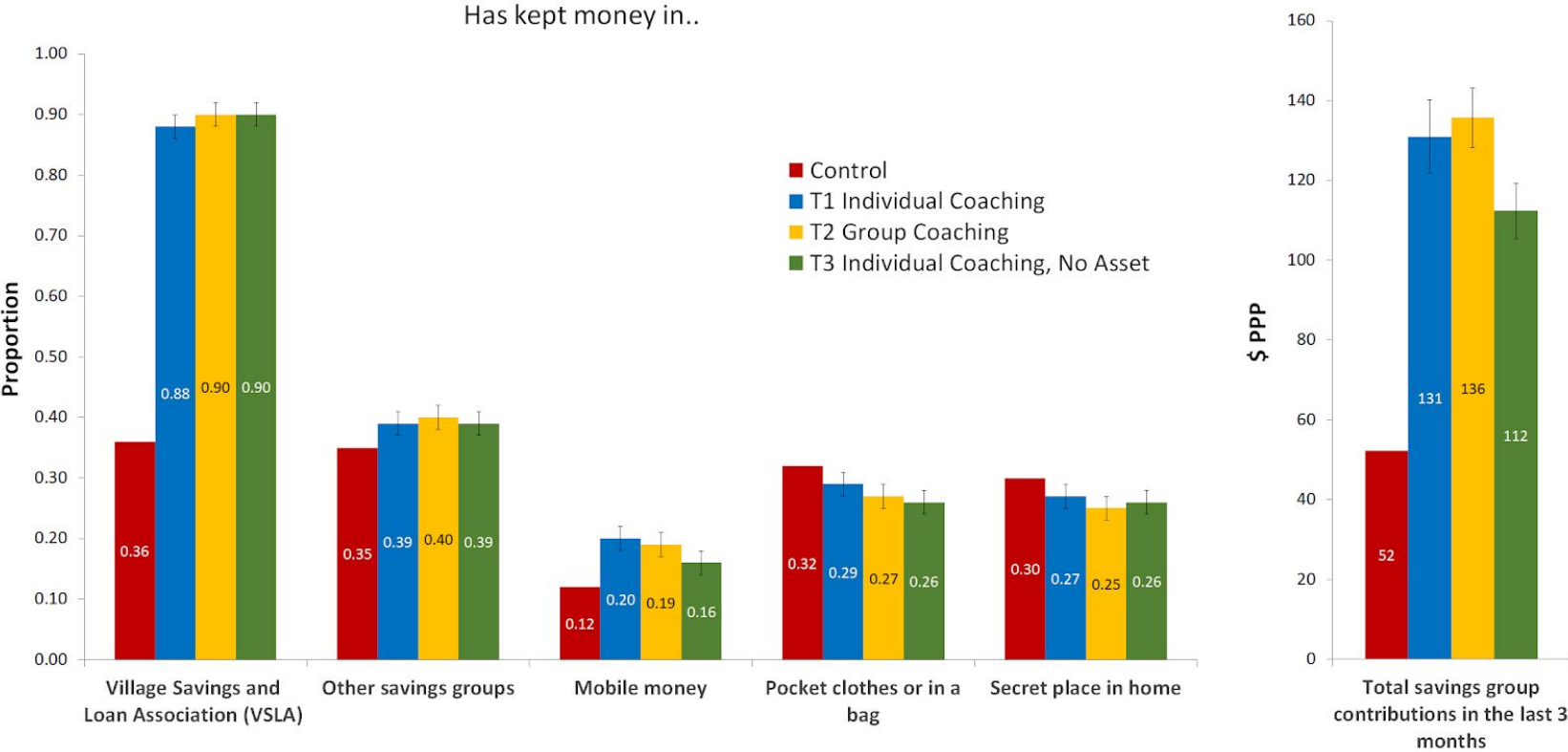
# Increased investments into farming



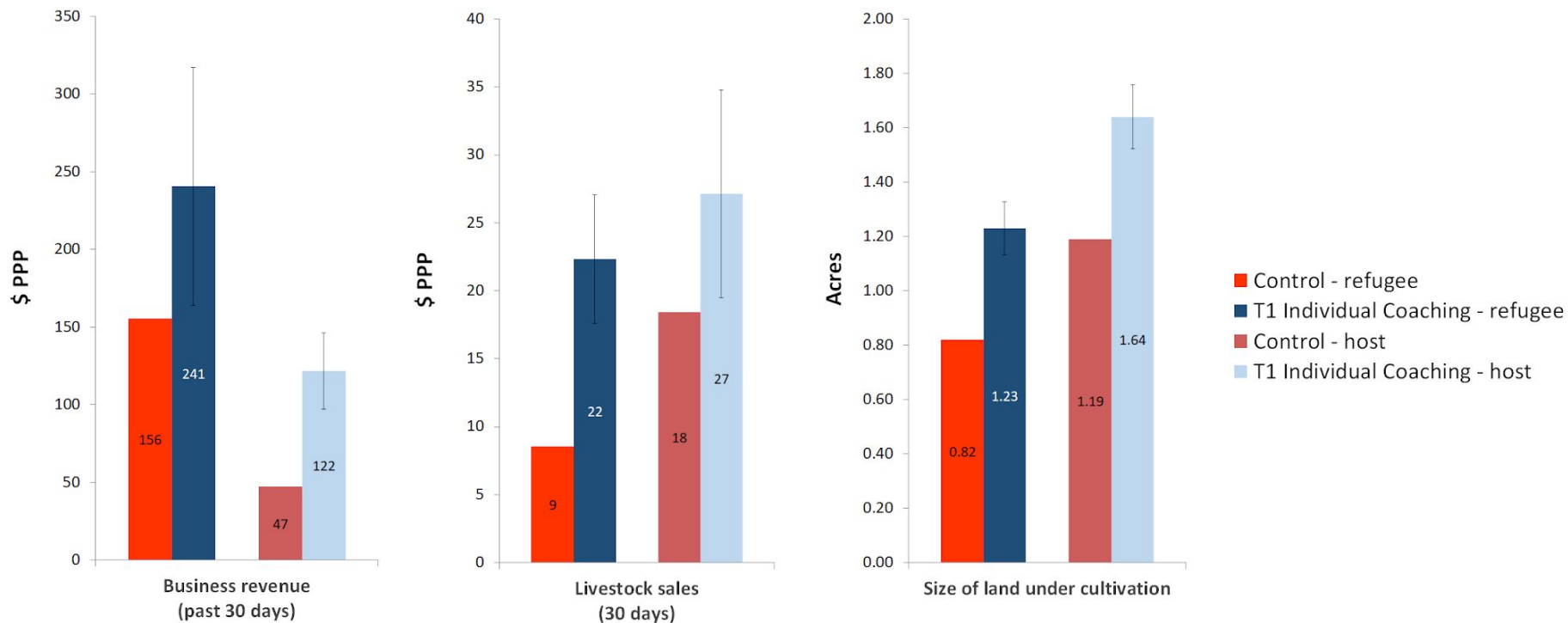
# Substitution away from daily labor (but net gains)



# Effects on saving behavior

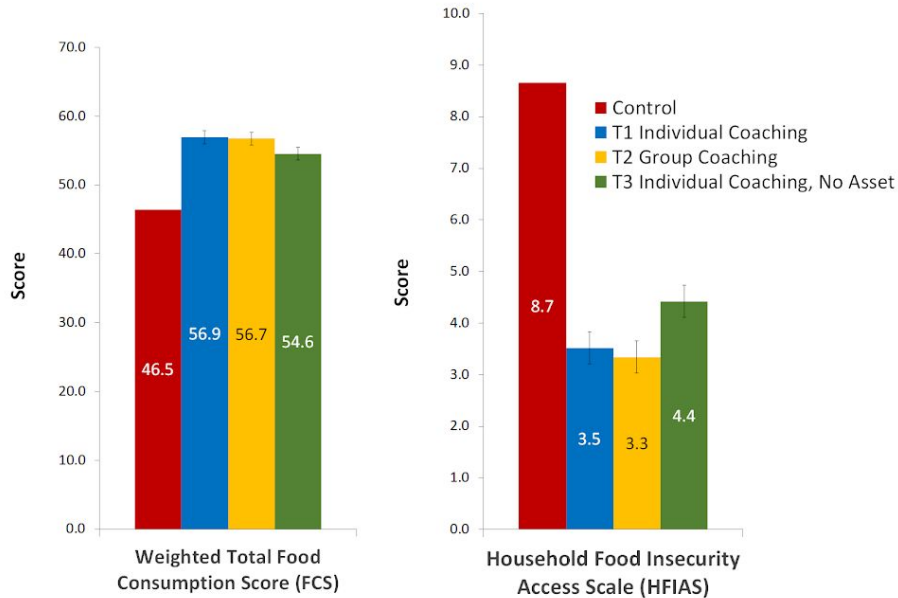


# Ref. vs hosts: impacts on economic activity

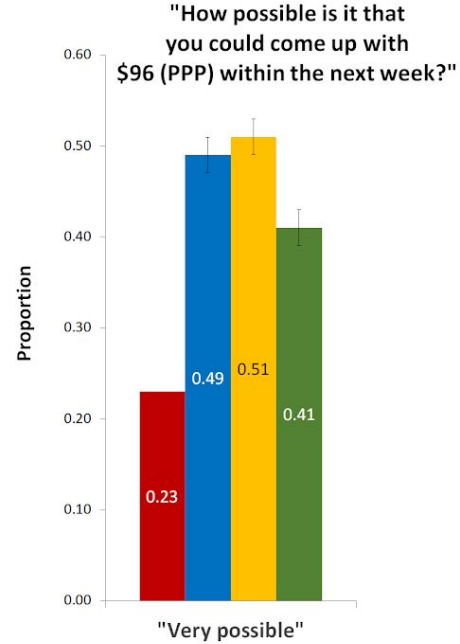


# Strongly positive effects on measures of wellbeing

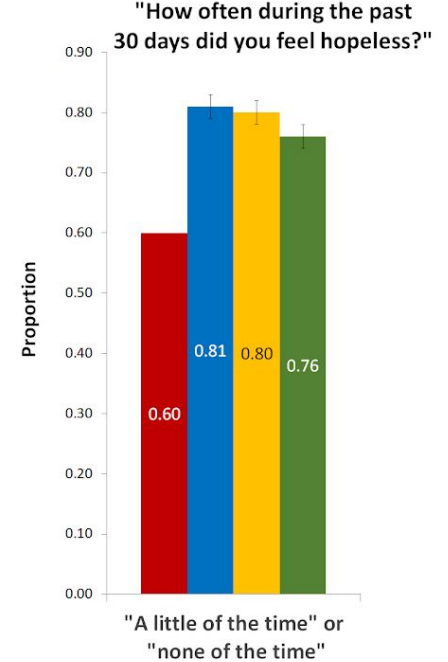
## Food security



## Financial health



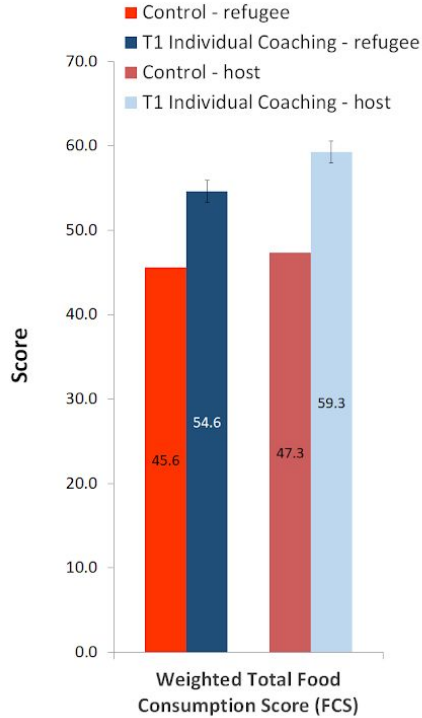
## Mental health



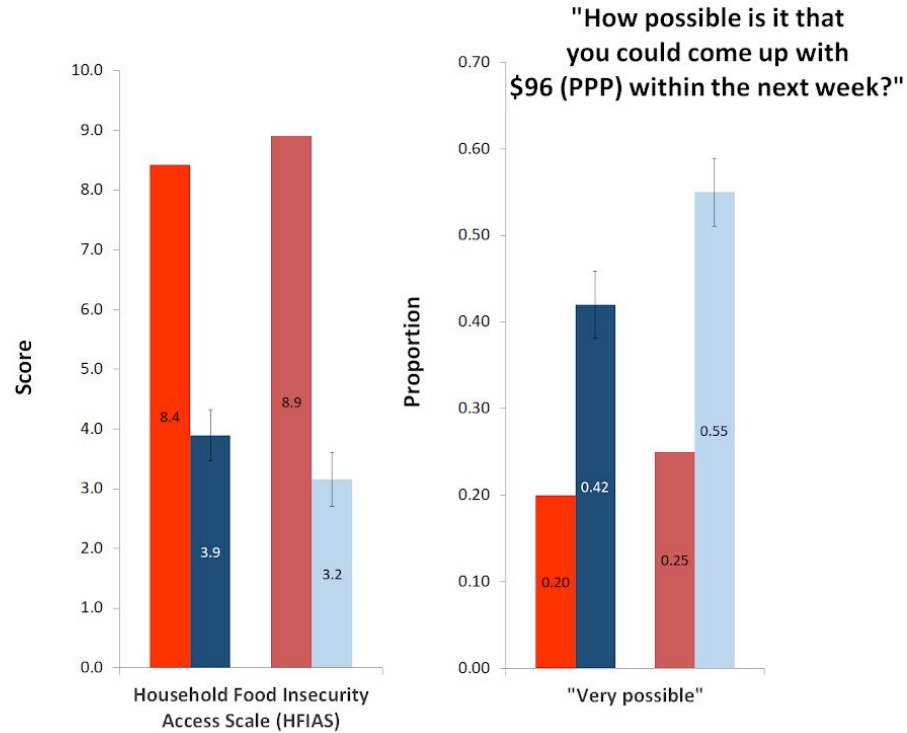


# Welfare measures: refugees vs. host

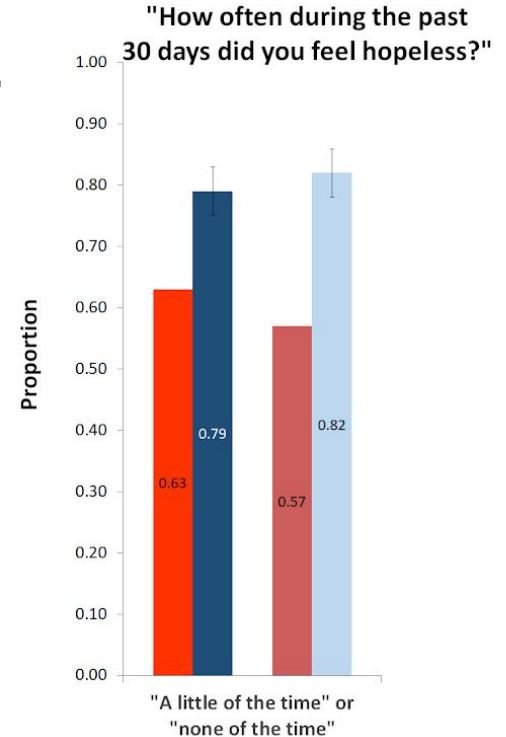
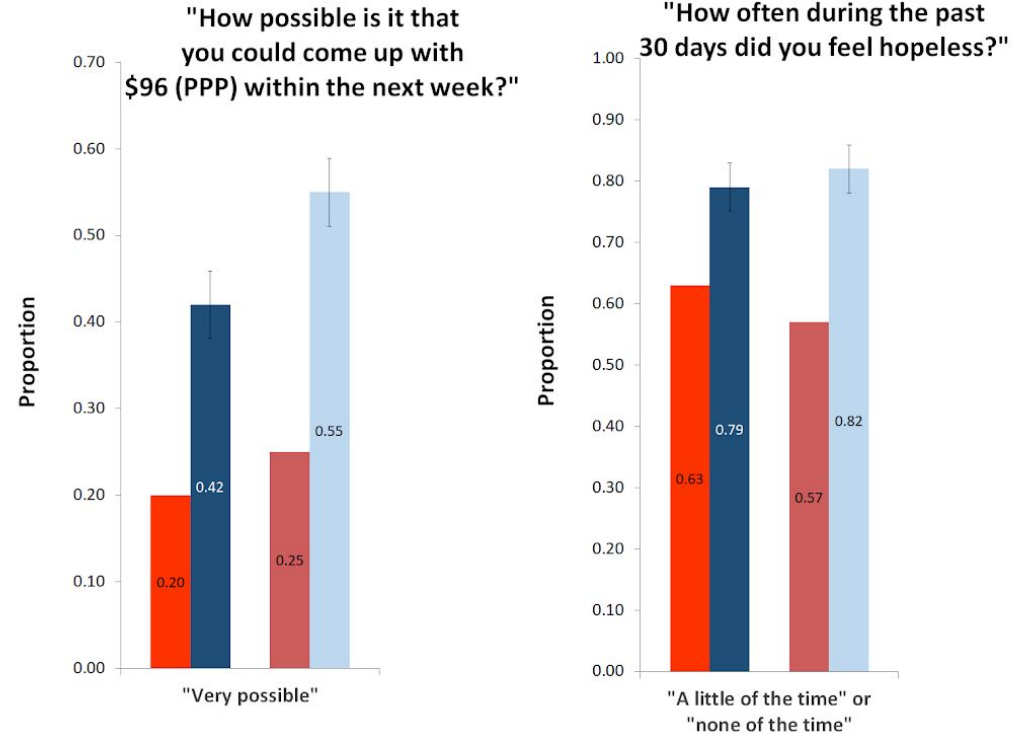
## Food security



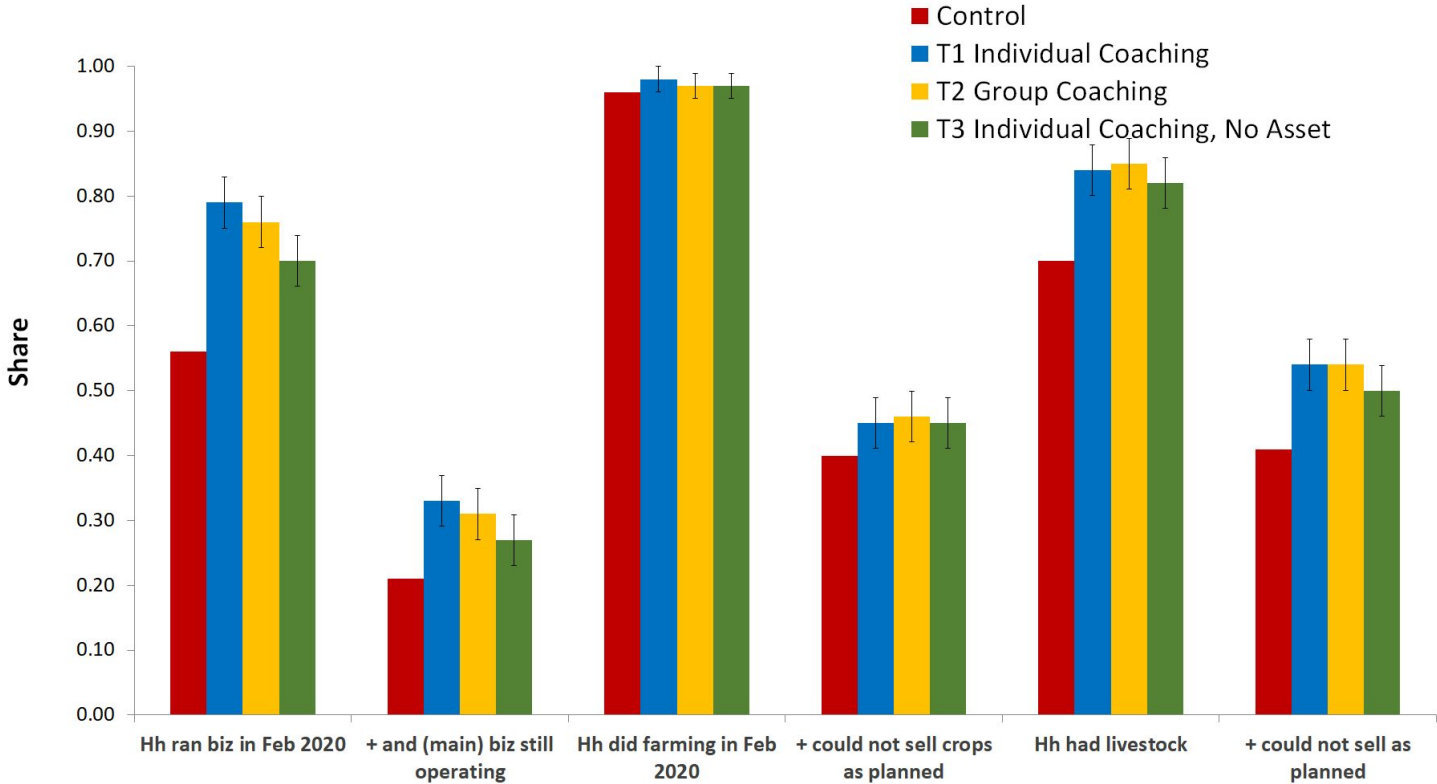
## Financial health



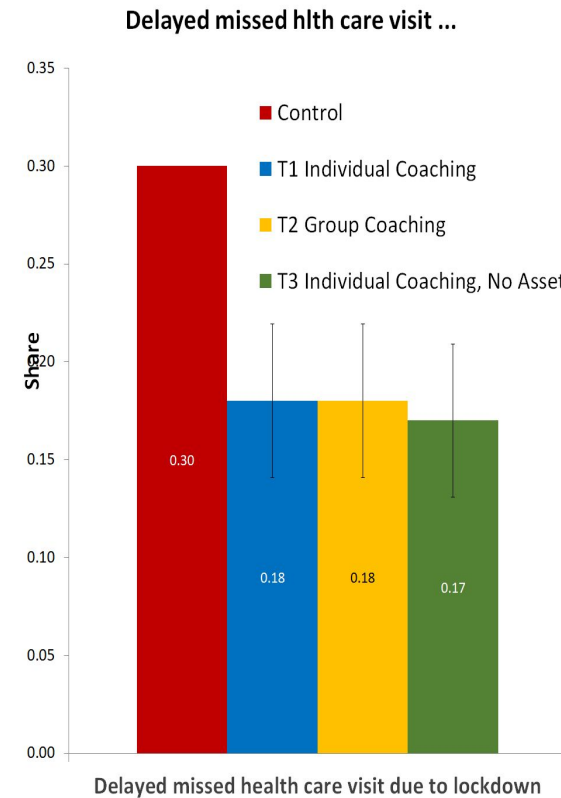
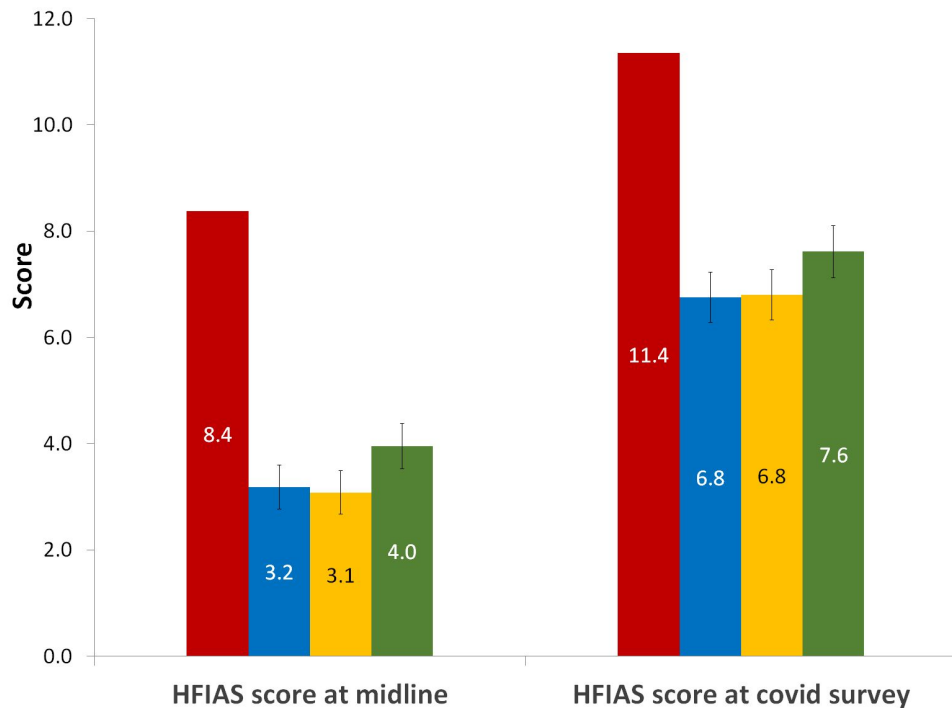
## Mental health



# Covid survey: impacts on economic activity



# Food security worsens between midline and covid phone survey follow-up but interventions have sustained effects



# Conclusion

- RCT in Uganda designed to test:
  - the viability of a graduation approach in a refugee settlement setting
  - the effectiveness a lower coaching-intensity approach, with coaching in groups
  - the effectiveness of a less resource-intensive approach, without an asset transfer
- Results so far:
  - In the short run, program worked as intended
  - No difference between group and individual coaching ⇒ group coaching wins, for now
  - No-asset group has smaller but sizeable effects
- Main open questions: longer-run path, cost-benefit

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