As more farming households in developing countries transition to the production of high-value cash crops, increasing attention is being paid to ensuring that women are integrated into these lucrative value chains and to improving returns to women’s production efforts. A wide range of studies have found that while cash cropping increases household income, the majority of this new income remains controlled by men. Although women provide labor for cash crops, in many cases men perform all of the market-facing activities. Such a gender imbalance poses two main problems. First, when men control the income generated by the production of cash crops, women may have fewer incentives to contribute to household production. Second, men may be less likely to spend money on household food security, nutrition, and health than women (Duflo, 2003; Quisumbing, 2003; Qian, 2008). Thus, the gender imbalance in cash cropping, particularly in terms of who controls the income generated, may help explain why increases in income as a result of cash crop production do not always translate into improved household welfare (von Braun et al., 1989; von Braun, 1988; Rubin and Webb, 1988; von Braun and Immink, 1990; Kennedy and Cogill, 1987; Kennedy and Cogill, 1988; Kennedy, 1989).

Despite the importance of integrating women into value chains, however, little rigorous evidence exists regarding which interventions can actually help accomplish this goal. This project tests two approaches to increasing women’s integration into and returns from cash crop value chains. We aim to determine whether these interventions affect intrahousehold allocation of resources, decision-making power, consumption and investment, productivity of the cash crop at the household level, and success of contract fulfillment for the buyer of the crop.

THE INTERVENTIONS

The Farm and Family Balance research team partnered with Kakira Sugar Limited (KSL), the largest sugarcane processing company in Uganda, and with around 2,400 smallholder farming households that sell to this processor. In this arrangement, farmers sign contracts to sell their cane to the processor and can receive advances against their final sales in the form of inputs, land preparation services, and cash. While the company has no specific policy regarding gender, the vast majority of its contracts are signed with men.

To be included in the study, households had to meet specific eligibility criteria, including association with KSL and married household head. Eligible households were enrolled in the study and participated in a baseline survey. In this survey, researchers interviewed the husband and wife separately and asked questions regarding basic household demographics and sugar and non-sugar agriculture, including labor and non-labor inputs, employment and non-agricultural income, assets, savings, children’s welfare, and women’s empowerment.

Following the baseline survey, households were randomly assigned in a 2X2 design to receive one, both, or neither of two interventions. The first intervention consisted of a three-day, couples-based Family Vision Workshop focusing on communication and cooperation between spouses, gender sensitivity, and women’s participation in cash cropping. The workshops may impact family behavior on their own and should also increase take-up of the second intervention. The second intervention encouraged male heads of block registered to KSL or not registered to any company, and (iii) household head has no outstanding liens against his cane.
household to either transfer an existing sugarcane contract to their wife or to allow their wife to register a new contract in her own name. By holding a contract directly, women can become more involved in the market-facing activities of sugarcane farming and the management of production activities on the contracted cane plots. They can also receive inputs on credit and directly receive cash advances and the final payment from the processor. Approximately one-quarter of households received only the workshop intervention, one-quarter received only the contract intervention, one-quarter received both, and one-quarter comprised the control group.

**TAKE-UP OF INTERVENTIONS**

The success of the Farm and Family Balance project depends on the voluntary take-up of the interventions by the selected participants, both in terms of workshop participation and acceptance of contracts.

The workshops were conducted in late 2016. Couples assigned to workshops were invited through home visits by project staff and then grouped based on geographic location. Despite the significant time commitment, interest in and attendance at the workshops were high, and most couples attended all three days. Seventy-four percent of invited couples were present at least two days (more than half) of the workshops. When taking into account the cases in which one spouse attended without the other, two-day attendance rises to approximately 79 percent of both husbands and wives.

Figure 1. Workshop Attendance

The initial phase of the contract intervention began in early 2017 and processing of contracts continued into the third quarter of that year. Households assigned to the contract intervention received an initial visit from project staff, followed by verification visits from a KSL representative. Contracts were then further processed and verified in the KSL offices. Following processing, project staff returned to participating households to finalize the process by giving women their new KSL ID cards and a household thank-you gift.

Response to the contract intervention was positive. Despite concerns that husbands would not want to participate, 78 percent of households initially agreed to either a transfer of a block or a registration of a new block. Several households lost interest or were deemed ineligible during the verification process. Transfers and registrations were formally completed with 71 percent of the assigned sample. Of those that completed a transfer or registration, 5 percent of households registered or transferred more than one block. Eighty-three percent of households that completed take-up registered a new block, and 18 percent transferred an existing block. Final take-up was higher among those who also received the workshop intervention (74 percent) compared to those who did not (68 percent).

Figure 2. Contract Take-up

High project take-up has resulted in a large increase in the number of KSL contracts held by women, as well as in the number of women in our sample who have contracts (which was <1 percent at baseline). Because registration requires a bank account, the intervention has also increased the number of women with bank accounts (which was only 12 percent at baseline). As part of this project, both KSL and the partner bank worked with the research team to temporarily modify procedures in order to make the registration and opening of accounts easier for women. This included visiting women in their homes and relaxing certain ID requirements.

These results illustrate high take-up rates for both project interventions. Based on the project success to-date, the research team will proceed to measure the interventions’ impact through survey data collected in late 2017 and late 2018, supplemented by sales data from KSL. If the contract intervention yields positive impacts for farmers and buyers, the model could be replicated with other large buyers and processors. Similarly, if the workshops are beneficial for farmers, local NGOs may adopt them as a cost-effective approach to gender-balanced efforts to increase productivity.

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2 Those that did not take-up comprise both refusals and cases in which the couple could not be located.

3 Ineligibility resulted from factors such as block size or age, or cases in which the household had planned to plant a block for the wife but did not do so within the timeframe of the intervention.
REFERENCES


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