Innovations for Poverty Action

Staff
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Timeline
9:00am - 2:00pm

Date
February 15, 2018

Enhancing Agricultural Production in Burkina Faso: Evidence from a Project With Sorghum

Innovations for Poverty Action recently partnered with US-based Michigan State University (MSU) and two partners in Burkina Faso, the Institute for the Environment and Agricultural Research (INERA) and the Association of Wholesalers and Agricultural Input Retailers (AGRODIA), on an evaluation entitled "Investment Orientation to Sustainable Agricultural Intensification in Africa."

Despite the availability of new agricultural technologies, which may increase yields and household income, few farmers in Burkina Faso and elsewhere in the Sahel region of Sub-Saharan Africa are using improved seeds and fertilizer. This study tested different ways of organizing the market for inputs and examined how adoption of a fertilizer application technique called microdosing spreads from farmer to farmer. Read the full summary of the evaluation here.

This project was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and the USAID BASIS program. In partnership with national agricultural research systems, it sought to increase food security and resilience through options to reduce poverty, hunger, malnutrition and environmental degradation.

Preliminary results suggest that subsidies alone were not effective in increasing take-up, but that a soft commitment—where people committed to buying inputs at the time when they had cash in hand—significantly increased adoption of inputs, at no additional cost to providers. Results also suggest that targeting based on social network characteristics affects patterns of diffusion, particularly in cases where women are excluded from social networks.

The main objectives of the workshop were to present the important results generated in the project. Specifically, they were to:

- Present the constraints related to the adoption of technological packages
- Inform rural stakeholders about alternative options to help producers get out of poverty

and better target development and technical production programs adapted to socio-economic conditions.
- Equip decision-makers to better design interventions and formulate agricultural investment policies that will ensure food security for Sahelian farmers.

The workshop's paticipants were largely researchers and government policymakers. Participants included project researchers Isabelle Dabiré, Adama Traoré, Souleymane Ouedraogo and Karim Sawadogo. The workshop was moderated by Dr. François Lompo, a former Minister of Agriculture in Burkina Faso.

Today the use of subsidies is common in Burkina Faso, but the discussion revolved around the implications of the study's results that even though subsidies have a positive impact on agricultural inputs adoption, they were not nearly as impactful as early input fairs. As subsidies are very costly for the government, organizing early fairs might be a good alternative.

An article featuring this event was published by Agence D'Information Du Burkina.

City

Ouagadougou

Country

Burkina Faso