



# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

# PROVIDING INFORMATION TO EMPOWER WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE: EVIDENCE FROM UGANDA



Photo: IFPRI

## What

The Feed the Future Developing Local Extension Capacity (DLEC) investigated the consequences of [male-biased agricultural extension and advisory services](#) by testing the differential effectiveness of the provision of and exposure to information by gender.

## Why

In many developing countries, women often have limited ability to make important strategic choices, let alone transform those choices into desired action and outcomes. Agricultural extension systems in developing countries tend to target male farmers with information that is rarely tailored to their female counterparts. Research suggests that targeting women with relevant information in formats that are both accessible and appealing can change this reality. However, all information campaigns are not equally successful. Often, seemingly small design attributes can have substantial impacts on effectiveness. We explore the impacts of how gender affects ways that information is provided and received in the context of Ugandan smallholder maize farmers,

a particularly important target population for the Government of Uganda and its development partners.

## How

We designed an experiment in eastern Uganda involving 3,300 smallholder maize-farming households that varied both the provision of and exposure to information by gender. Information was disseminated through videos that consisted of an inspirational personal story about the struggles related to low maize yields, information about a range of productivity-enhancing strategies, and a discussion on the costs and benefits of the different practices and inputs being promoted. We varied who was featured in the video (messengers): A male extension agent, a female extension agent, or both together. We further varied who saw the videos in the participating households: The male co-head, the female co-head, or the co-heads together.

## Partners

IFPRI

## Timeline

August 2018 - March 2019



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Digital  
Green



INTERNATIONAL  
FOOD POLICY  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE



global forum for rural advisory services  
forum mondial pour le conseil rural  
foro global para los servicios de asesoria rural

This factsheet is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Digital Green and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

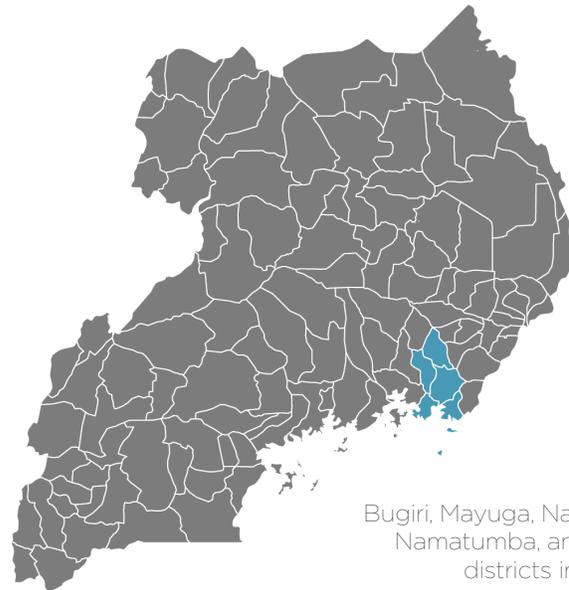
## Results

We find that targeting women within the household (as opposed to only the male co-head) with extension information has a positive effect on different domains of empowerment. This includes women's knowledge of agronomic practices, their participation in agricultural decision-making, and their adoption of recommended practices and inputs. Our analysis also reveals positive effects on production-related outcomes, such as maize yield, as well as market participation. For instance, providing the information to only the female co-head as opposed to providing it to only the male co-head increases the likelihood that she independently sells maize by 4 percentage points.

The empowerment impacts of involving women as messengers, the role model effect, seem more complicated. While we find no effect on women's knowledge, decision-making, or adoption of recommended agronomic practices, involving women as messengers may lead to an increase in women's use of organic fertilizer.

Looking only at households where women co-heads were targeted, we find that if these women were shown a video featuring a woman providing the information, they are more likely to take the lead in decision making. Furthermore, we find that if men were shown a video featuring a woman, they are less likely to make decisions unilaterally.

This suggests that involving women as messengers may have challenged beliefs and stereotypes about women being less able to make decisions related to agriculture.



Bugiri, Mayuga, Namayingo, Namatumba, and Iganga districts in Uganda

## Contacts

**BJORN VAN CAMPENHOUT** Research Fellow,  
International Food Policy Research Institute

**HENRY KINYUA**, Head of East Africa New Initiatives,  
Digital Green

[eascop@digitalgreen.org](mailto:eascop@digitalgreen.org)



Photo: IFPRI