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“Development on the margin”

Gender Differentials in Agricultural Extension Services: Empirical Evidence from Uganda

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Abstract

Considering the important role of women in African agriculture, providing agricultural advisory services to women farmers is essential for pro-poor agricultural development. Yet, reaching women, especially in marginal areas, has remained a challenge for agricultural extension providers. The paper presents the findings of a survey conducted in 2005 to assess the gender gaps in Uganda's liberalised, pluralistic and decentralised extension system. The objective of the study was to derive policy implications for gender-responsive interventions aimed at enhancing access to agricultural extension to women, based on an analysis of empirical quantitative data on the gender gaps in Uganda's agricultural extension system.

The study assessed effectiveness of the three types of extension providers (the public, NGOs and the NAADS programme services) in reaching women farmers as well as in providing a conducive work environment for female agricultural extension agents (AEAs). The study was found that female AEAs accounted for only 11 % of extension staff, and a majority of them were located in districts neighbouring urban centres. Some districts had no female AEAs at all. With regard to differences between male and female extension service providers' access to working resources and facilities, men were found to have greater access to motorbikes compared to women. This gap was widest in NGOs, followed by NAADS and the government, in that order. There was no significant difference in access to office mobile phones and official airtime for male and female AEAs in all three types of extension systems, except for government where women had greater access. Female AEAs accessed the internet more intensively than male AEAs, but the difference was not statistically significant. Using a Maximum Likelihood Probit Regression model, the study identified age, level of education and organisational affiliation as main determinants of access to motorbikes and internet by AEAs. Expectedly, younger and better educated AEAs were more likely to have access to the internet. NGO-affiliated AEAs were also more likely to have access to internet than government-employed AEAs.

A two limit tobit model revealed that the gender of the AEAs and their organisational affiliation were key determinants of the types of farmers served. In line with other findings in the literature, female AEAs were more likely to provide advisory services to female farmers than male AEAs. The study also found that AEAs affiliated with NAADS and NGOs were more likely to provide advisory services to women than government-affiliated AEAs. There was a higher adoption of new technologies by male farmers who received advisory

services from government and NAADS-affiliated AEAs for all technologies reported. However, adoption rates were higher for female farmers who received advisory services from NGO-affiliated AEAs on agrochemicals and plant protection than was the case for male farmers. The paper derives recommendations for addressing the gender gaps identified in the study.

Keywords: Gender gaps, pluralistic decentralised agricultural extension, Uganda