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## How Does Social Capital Influence the Success of Development Projects? Insights from a Randomised Controlled Trial in Kenya

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### Abstract

Social capital plays an important role for the adoption of agricultural technologies and can therefore positively influence farmers' livelihoods. One dimension of social capital refers to the way people are embedded in their networks. Common-interest groups (CIGs) are important information networks used for channeling agricultural extension programs. CIGs are chosen with the rationale of reducing transaction costs. Though, little is known about how the social capital of a CIG, as well as the social capital of individuals embedded in them, can determine projects' successes. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the flow of agriculture and nutrition information within CIGs, how initial social capital on CIG and household level changes through the introduction of a development project and how social capital influences the project's success. The results can help to improve the targeting of CIGs and individuals and increase the impact of nutrition-sensitive agricultural projects.

The analysis is based on a clustered randomised controlled trial (RCT) implemented in rural Kenya. Forty-eight CIGs were randomly sampled. Out of each group, a random sample of 20 members was drawn. The treatments were carried out in 2016 and consisted of varying combinations of agricultural and nutrition training. Overall, 36 groups received training held by local extension officers. The broader purpose of the extension training was the promotion of pro-nutrition innovations. Survey data, including detailed information about social networks from 824 households was collected before (2015) and after (2016) the intervention. The analysis is performed on group and on individual levels. To proxy social capital, we rely on concepts such as network density for different types of relation (e.g. information exchange about agriculture and nutrition). The concepts used originate from social network analysis' literature. For the econometric analysis, we use project's success as our dependent variable measured by participation in training, and adoption of the promoted technologies.

First results on group level suggest that groups with initially high social capital have higher participation rates in training sessions.

**Keywords:** Agricultural extension, common-interest groups, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, social network analysis, technology adoption