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## The Perception of Deficiencies of Smallholder Coffee Farmers, a Panel Analysis of a Rural Community in Eastern Uganda

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### Abstract

For most smallholder farmers in the Mount Elgon region of Uganda, Arabica coffee cultivation is the major income-generating activity. It is well-known that smallholder coffee farmers often live under conditions that do not surpass existential needs. Even if development activities are partly implemented in the region, the perception of deficiencies of coffee farmers is not well examined.

Quantitative and qualitative answers of 431 smallholder coffee farmers, living in three sub-counties in the Mount Elgon region, interviewed in 2018 and in 2019, are used to identify categories and intensity of deficiencies. In addition, changes in perceptions deriving from a comparison of the two surveys are analysed and discussed, as well as the potential causes for improvements or deteriorations.

Results from the explorative Factor-analysis identified five factors which have been grouped into two main topics (1) constitution for farm management activities and (2) general life quality. Whereas the perception of deficiencies in the constitution for farm management activities differs significantly between the three investigated sub-counties, the perception of variables linked to general life quality was more equally distributed.

Interestingly, most of the farmers and their wives do not perceive the lack of health insurance as one of their major deficiencies. Rather, water quality and mosquitos are mentioned as the main favouring appearance factors for sickness, especially during the first interview round in 2018. Improvements of water quality in the second survey round 2019 could be explained by the implementation of tap water and water filters. However, water availability and nutrition supply are not perceived to have high impacts on health conditions. Furthermore, a two-way ANOVA showed improvements in access to health care centres nearby for HHs based in the Simu district, whereas coffee farmers living in the two other sub-counties recognised deteriorations in comparison to the previous year of the survey.

For all factors, improvements but also deteriorations were perceived to result from external forces such as NGOs, the government and climate change.

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