



Tropentag, September 9-11, 2020, virtual conference

“Food and nutrition security and its resilience  
to global crises”

## Assessing the Impacts of Large-scale Agricultural Investments: Quantitative and Qualitative Insights from Zambia

RAOUL HERRMANN

*German Development Institute, Germany*

### Abstract

Large-scale agricultural investments (LSAI) have increased rapidly over the last decade, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Zambia, a country often portrayed as having large amounts of suitable and available land and high yield gaps, promotes LSAI to achieve agricultural growth and poverty reduction. The evidence on the impacts of LSAI is, however, ambiguous. Literature stresses the importance of the terms of inclusion or exclusion. Outgrower programs are often promoted as arrangements to include local farmers to guarantee positive implications. This article studies a LSAI by a European investment company in Zambia. The company acquired more than 40,000 hectares, of which 3,000 hectares are operational. It operates an outgrower programme involving 8000 farmers.

The article uses a mixed-method approach to analyse direct and indirect socio-economic effects. Qualitative data was collected in 2017 and 2018 through semi-structured expert interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) with farmers, farm coordinators and casual workers. As part of the quantitative approach, a household survey was carried out in 2018 with 800 farm households in the same districts. Data was collected among farm households directly participating in any of the activities offered (treatment group) and farm households not (yet) targeted (comparison group).

The quantitative analysis uses descriptive statistics and quasi-experimental impact evaluation techniques (propensity score matching) to study adoption of trained farming practices (conservation agriculture) and promoted technologies as well as the agricultural performance and household income of participating and non-participating groups and different subgroups. The presentation focusses on the qualitative analysis and presents descriptive and econometric results of the analysis of the household survey data.

**Keywords:** Impact evaluation, Large-scale Land Acquisitions, outgrower schemes, smallholder market integration, Zambia