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## Can gender-intentional information campaigns through social institutions enhance women’s participation in wheat seed markets?

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### Abstract

Although many women actively participate in household crop production, farming under female responsibility is often characterised by low adoption and turnover rates of modern varieties. Enhancing equitable access to improved seeds can increase productivity of female managed cropping systems, foster social inclusion, and improve food security in the Global South. In small-scale wheat systems, female farmers often rely on informal seed sources and seeds from own stocks to obtain planting material. One major limitation to a more frequent uptake of fresh seeds includes the limited exposure and access to information on agricultural technologies, especially as women tend to be underrepresented in community-based farmer institutions and underserved by agricultural extension system. Through a randomised controlled trial, this study quantifies the effects of the delivery of gender-intentional information campaigns on the purchase of fresh wheat seeds by female farmers in Ethiopia. Implemented between May and June 2023 with 1000–1400 farmers, the study relies on existing socio-economic institutions to channel information on available varieties in the formal seed market and their agronomic properties to farmers. In contrast to conventional approaches, information campaigns are delivered through village-level institutions that are dominated by female or male members. Villages are randomly assigned to the following treatment arms: information campaigns through male dominated farmer cooperatives and female dominated women groups (T1); information campaigns through farmer cooperatives only (T2). Comparison of the share of female farmers who purchase fresh wheat seeds between treatment arms and control villages without information campaigns (C) allows the estimation of the treatment effect of gender intentional information campaigns on share of fresh seed purchases by female farmers. We hypothesise that gender-intentional information delivery has a positive effect on the purchase of fresh seeds from formal sources among female farmers in female headed households, and female farmers in dual headed households. We further postulate, that the effect of information on seed purchase is highest where female farmers already have an active role in household decision-making in crop production. Results will support the design of gender-intentional extension services, marketing, and delivery of newly released wheat varieties through the formal seed sector in Ethiopia.

**Keywords:** Adoption of agricultural technologies, Ethiopia, gender, village institutions, wheat