



Tropentag, September 10-12, 2025, hybrid conference

“Reconcile land system changes
with planetary health”

Agricultural commercialisation and children’s welfare: Impacts on diets and education

FRANCIS E NDIP¹, PEREZ L KEMENI KAMBIET², ERNEST L MOLUA³

¹*University of Bonn, Center for Development Research (ZEF), Germany*

²*Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, International Water Research Institute, Morocco*

³*University of Buea, Dept. of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, Cameroon*

Abstract

Agricultural commercialisation could be instrumental in improving the welfare of smallholder farm households, contributing to poverty reduction and broader development. While evidence is growing on the welfare effects of commercialisation, there is little evidence on the implications for children, especially on their dietary and educational outcomes, which are important human capital investments. We fill this gap by using detailed individual level data from Cameroon to estimate the effects of commercialisation on children’s dietary and educational outcomes. We use different measures for educational outcomes such as school attendance rate and number of school days attended, which allows us to perform both an extensive and intensive margin analysis. Our measure of dietary quality is the children’s dietary diversity score. We also perform a gender-disaggregated analysis for boys and girls, to shed more light on who benefits from commercialisation, given that considerable heterogeneities may exist in welfare benefits. We employ instrumental variable methods to address potential endogeneity of commercialisation. Our results show that commercialisation is positively associated with children’s diet quality and educational outcomes. The gender-disaggregated analysis shows that girls are more likely to benefit from commercialisation compared to boys. Our results are robust to alternative estimation strategies and after controlling for multiple hypothesis testing. These results suggest that commercialisation may lead to improvements in human capital investments in children as well as drive gender-equality among children in rural settings and contribute to the goals of sustainable development.

To this end, policy actions should be geared at improving smallholder commercialization especially in developing countries.

Keywords: Agricultural commercialisation, children, education, gender, human capital