

MCC Impact Evaluation Conference
January 21, 2011

Evaluating Farmer Training Programs

Moderator: Ariel BenYishay

Panelists: Annette Brown (3ie), Michael Carter (University of California), Kristin Penn (U.S. Department of State/Feed the Future), and Mushfiq Mobarak (Yale University)

Ariel BenYishay: *Why is Farmer Training Important?*

- Why does agricultural productivity remain low in the developing world?
- Leading theories: credit constraints, lack of insurance, land tenure weaknesses, imperfect information. This session addresses these potential explanations.

Annette Brown: *Systematic Review of the Impact of Farmer Field Schools*

[\(0:00\)](#)

<http://www.3ieimpact.org/systematicreviews/>

- Focus of review is on Farmer Field Schools
- Systematic 3ie Review: Objective is to synthesize best available evidence using Cochrane/Campbell Collaboration SR methodology
- Why and how does change occur? Requires a theory of change. In this case: Field Schools → Capacity Building → Participants (direct and indirect beneficiaries) → Adoption → Measured Impact
- Results
 - Reduced pesticide use/increased yield for program participants but not for social networks of participants
 - Revenue increases for the treated but only low quality evidence for those in their networks
 - Reduced environmental risk factors
 - Sustainability of yields after two years is not demonstrated

Michael Carter: *The Impact of Business Services on the Economic Well-being of Small Farmers in Nicaragua*

[\(15:00\)](#)

- Nicaragua Rural Business Program
 - Use poverty metric as opposed to yields to evaluate agricultural program impact
 - Intended to enhance technical assistance, business know-how, and market access
 - Participants self-selected into the program conditional on passing program selection criteria
- Interim Results
 - Overall effects are not significantly different from zero
 - Significant effects for upper performing quantiles only
 - Upper performing quantiles have an IRR of 14%
 - Heterogeneity is still puzzling

Kristin Penn: *"Impact Evaluation within Feed the Future"*

[\(38:45\)](#)

<http://www.feedthefuture.gov/monitoringevaluation.html>

- Goal is to reduce global hunger and poverty by tackling root causes
- Increase inclusive and sustainable agriculture sector growth
- Increase nutritional status for women and children
- Evaluates impact for 20 countries and 5 regional programs using cost benefit analysis
- Elizabeth Roen: Introduction to new USAID Evaluation Policy

[\(57:00\)](#)

MCC Impact Evaluation Conference
January 21, 2011

Mushfiq Mobarak: *Using Social Networks to Improve Agricultural Extension Services* [\(1:02:00\)](#)

- Why are adoption rates for agricultural technology low?
 - Information failures: Don't know or don't believe the message
 - Government agricultural extension officers are often distrusted by rural farmers, rarely have farm experience, are poorly paid, and have high vacancies
- Can social networks be used to disseminate information?
 - Experimented as to whether the effects of extension officers are greater if they are extended through a member of the community, either farmers chosen to demographically represent the village or a wealthy farmer in the area
 - Preliminary results show that Peer/Lead farmer training provides a higher adoption rate of new methods