

Helen Keller International (HKI)

An Integrated Agriculture-Nutrition Program in Burkina Faso Can Change Gender Norms on Land and Asset Ownership

COUNTRY: Burkina Faso

YEAR(S) OF PROJECT/STUDY: 2010 - 2012

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BACKGROUND

Helen Keller International (HKI) carried out a two-year Enhanced-Homestead Food Production (E-HFP) pilot program (2010–2012) in Gourma Province in eastern Burkina Faso. The program's goal was to improve women's and children's nutrition and health outcomes through production and nutrition interventions. One way in which the program sought to improve its production and nutrition outcomes was by directly increasing women's access to and control over productive assets. To accomplish this objective, HKI trained women and gave them inputs for raising small animals and growing nutrient-rich foods, as well as health- and nutrition-related education delivered through a behavior change communication (BCC) strategy (Dillon et al. 2012). HKI partnered with the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project (GAAP) to measure the impact of the program's interventions on men's and women's accumulation, ownership, and control over productive assets, and to assess changes in norms and perceptions regarding the ownership, use, and control over these assets.

METHODOLOGY

Evaluating HKI's E-HFP program involved a longitudinal impact evaluation consisting of a quantitative baseline (2010) and endline (2012) household survey. Program impacts were measured at both the household and individual level and both male and female respondents were interviewed separately about issues such as assets, agricultural production, and livestock ownership. Two separate rounds of qualitative research were also conducted during the quantitative survey period. The qualitative research was primarily designed to provide insight into why the program did or did not improve women's agricultural production and maternal and child health and nutrition outcomes, by examining issues related to the delivery and utilization of program services. In addition, it was designed to examine the gendered implications of the E-HFP program in terms of access to and control over productive assets.

FINDINGS

Certain changes occurred during the two years of the E-HFP program's operation, specifically regarding asset ownership and control and gender norms:

- 1. Women Made Gains in Asset Ownership:** While men continued to own the majority of agricultural assets, women began to own more assets. Further, women's assets increased more in intervention villages than in control villages. The average number of agricultural assets owned by women in intervention villages increased to a statistically significant degree relative to the average number owned by women in control villages. Program impacts on small animals were statistically significant and positive for both men and women, but with the differential increase for men larger than that for women (4.3 versus 2.6). Moreover, the proportional gap between men and women in ownership of agricultural assets narrowed more in intervention villages than in control villages. Finally, women in intervention villages reduced land cultivated between 2010 and 2012, whereas men's land holdings remained relatively constant as compared to control villages. However, this is likely due to the intensification of women's agricultural production to higher value horticulture crops. Thus the results represent a redistribution of land cultivated across seasons with greater quality due to the availability of irrigation in the dry season.

2. **Women Gained More Control Over Their Gardens and Profits:** The qualitative research showed that women's control over productive assets increased in intervention villages. Women were primarily responsible for the care of the garden, and they were more likely to make decisions about the use of their gardens' products and the proceeds earned from these products than men. Additionally, while men still owned the majority of land for the garden at the end of the pilot program, there was an increase in the percentage of women who owned land for the garden (as reported by beneficiary women). Although men generally retained control of the larger livestock, women's decision-making power with regards to chickens and goats increased significantly as compared to control villages and was actually higher than men's decision-making power for the treated villages (41% of women and 35% of men reported having decisionmaking power in intervention villages versus 29% of women and 58% of men in control villages). Also, both men's and women's perceptions of and opinions about who could own and control certain assets appeared to have become more open to female control and ownership. This change was more pronounced in intervention villages than control villages.
3. **Perceptions about Women's Ownership and Control Over Land Are Changing:** Men and women across villages stated that while men could inherit land, women could not and could only obtain land through gifts or marriage. Nevertheless, half of men and women in intervention villages reported that their opinions on who could own land, use it to grow fruits and vegetables, or both, had changed. Their opinions had altered because of changing gender roles, the HKI program, and changes in consumption.

FEEDBACK ON STUDY BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH DEANNA OLNEY AND MARA VAN DEN BOLD:

1. What are the unique gender-asset questions and indicators you collected in your survey instrument that were particularly valuable or reflective of methodologies you would like to see replicated in future work and why?
 - We had a process evaluation component embedded into our survey work in 2011, between the 2010 baseline and 2012 endline and a follow-up process evaluation in 2012. In general, a process evaluation analyzes the effectiveness of the program operations, implementation and delivery. This was an important component for our evaluation in two regards. First, it helped us to understand the local context in which the E-HFP program operated (norms regarding ownership, health knowledge, training capacity, etc). Second, we were able to visually map and examine the various pathways contributing to the program's impact as well as understand where actual pathways did or didn't differ from our program theory framework. As part of this evaluation, all parties involved in the program were interviewed (i.e. female beneficiaries, their husbands, landowners, garden program trainers, etc.) using a combination of qualitative and quantitative instruments. Both female beneficiaries and their husbands (husbands were only interviewed in the second round of the process evaluation) were asked questions about how the homestead garden program positively and negatively impacted their lives, child care and nutrition, and also the husband's perception of the program.
2. What are the unique gender-asset questions/indicators you either collected in your survey instrument that you would have implemented differently or you were not able to collect, but which you would have liked to collect and why?
 - While we were satisfied with the questions and indicators collected, in retrospect, we may have changed the mode by which we obtained some information. For instance, using vignettes instead of open-ended questions may have helped respondents answer hypothetical "how could this be better?" type questions, which can be hard for respondents if they have never experienced or heard of a possible alternative. More generally speaking, more creative options for asking qualitative questions would be valuable and using vignettes would be a good option to consider.
3. Asset-gender dynamics are heterogeneous, complex and rooted in social, economic and institutional factors—are there any background factors that relate strongly to gender-asset dynamics that you either collected or wish you had collected?
 - Yes, there are a few background factors I wish we had explored in more detail—mainly, information on inheritance patterns and who is allowed to own land, as well as the definition of ownership. We did have a module with questions regarding what people thought 'owning' land meant, what they thought 'having land rights' meant, what they thought having rights to 'use' land meant, what they thought having the right to make management decisions meant, and various follow up questions. However, land ownership emerged as a key issue through this evaluation but it wasn't necessarily a central idea going into it and thus these questions weren't asked in the baseline. Knowing more about the various ownership rights and associated meanings from the beginning would have been valuable.
4. Are there any particularities about the region or country of implementation which you think are important to recognize in relation to the gender-asset indicators you collected which are important for other researchers to be

aware of? Did any of these context- or country-specific factors influence your survey implementation methodology, and how?

- It would have been beneficial to have done more formative research on asset ownership and gender norms in order to better understand the political and cultural aspects surrounding land and other productive assets in this specific area in Burkina. Understanding these aspects are important to contextualize findings and to further understand why changes in certain behaviors or patterns in asset ownership did or did not take place. From what we found, the literature on land ownership patterns among different ethnic groups in Burkina Faso is not extensive. One study we drew upon by Kevane & Gray (1999) in western Burkina Faso found that women often work on land controlled by men but do not have much direct control over land. However, in certain ethnic groups (e.g. Mossi), women farm plots independently and have a lot of control over what is planted and over income from the plots, whereas in others (e.g. Bwa), women's rights are much more limited. So there can be large and important differences between ethnic groups. In our study area, the Gourmancema and Zaoga ethnic groups view women's rights similarly to the Mossi.
- For the second round of qualitative research in 2012, we felt it was important to gain some further understanding of how men and women viewed ownership of land in this particular study area, what they perceived their 'rights' to be, under what circumstances they felt it was or was not appropriate for women and men to own land and why – as these things can impact asset ownership and control and women's rights more broadly. We discovered interesting information in terms of how inheritance patterns influence land ownership and therefore who has control over what. Some of these type of questions may have been useful to have included also in the quantitative piece, or in the first round of qualitative research in 2010, to examine any changes in these patterns or in people's perceptions about what was happening.

5. What do you see as the largest methodological challenges in collecting gender-asset data in general and how can we as a research community work towards filling this gap?

- One large need is having greater guidance for how to integrate qualitative and quantitative research. They are complementary and valuable in incorporating gender into research, but integrating them well is a skill. Moreover, a greater understanding of when a quantitative question response option should include joint ownership, in addition to a male and female option, would be helpful to include in future guidelines. Our quantitative data was collected in a sex-disaggregated manner with basic male and female options; however, there was no joint option. We did allow for joint ownership in our qualitative research for questions; for instance, regarding control over the garden and small animals. In retrospect, there perhaps should have been a joint option for the quantitative survey as well but it's still unclear to me.

For more information about the HKI project please see van den Bold, M., A. Pedehombga, M. Ouedraogo, A. Quisumbing, and D. Olney. 2013. Can Integrated Agriculture-Nutrition Programs Change Gender Norms on Land and Asset Ownership? Evidence from Burkina Faso. IFPRI Discussion Paper 01315. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute. <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ifpridp01315.pdf>

For questionnaire(s) and survey instrument(s), please visit: <http://gaap.ifpri.info/tools-used-by-gaap/hki-tools/>

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