

Can Empowering Women Farmers Reduce Household Food Insecurity? Evidence from Malawi

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Abstract : Women in Malawi produce perform between 50-70 percent of all agricultural tasks and yet the majority remain food insecure. The aim of his paper is to build on existing mixed evidence that indicates that empowering women in agriculture is conducive to improving food security. The WEAI is used to provide evidence on the relationship between women's empowerment in agriculture and household food security. A multinomial logistic regression is applied to the Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) components and the Household Hunger Scale. The overall results show that the WEAI can be used to determine household food insecurity; however it has to be contextually adapted. Assets ownership, credit, group membership and leisure time are positively associated with food security. Contrary to other literature, empowerment in having control and decisions on income indicate negative association with household food security. These results could potentially better inform public, private and civil society stakeholders' dialogues in creating the most effective and sustainable interventions to help women attain long-term food security.

Keywords : food security, gender, empowerment, agriculture index, framework for African food security, household hunger scale

Conference Title : ICFSN 2015 : International Conference on Food Security and Nutrition

Conference Location : Istanbul, Türkiye

Conference Dates : January 26-27, 2015