

Do Microfinance and Social Protection Measures Strengthen the Capacities of Women in Sub-Saharan Africa?

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Abstract: More and more, gender parity is understood not only as reducing existing disparities between the two sexes, but also, and above all, as improving women's capacities, strengthening their empowerment, and improving their well-being. The aim of this paper is to elucidate the effects of agricultural microfinance and social protection measures on women's capacities. Using a logistic model based on panel data covering 180 SSA microfinances, we arrive at the following results: i) agricultural loans strengthen the capacities of women in SSA; ii) Social protection measures strengthen the capacities of women in SSA; and iii) the effects of agricultural loans and social protection measures on women's capacity building are more impactful in rural areas than in urban areas because of the more developed agricultural activities in these areas. It is important to provide more assistance to rural women to improve their living conditions through ongoing capacity building.

Keywords: Microfinancing, Social Protection, Empowerment, Women