

# Building Women's Skills for Economic Inclusion and Resilience

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# The Paper

- What are the effects of a program teaching entrepreneurial skills to ultra-poor women running or interested in running a business in rural areas?
- Positive effects on likelihood of running a business post-intervention and re-investing in it
- Positive effects on resilience during COVID-19

## Main Comments: Contributions

- Sample population: Ultra-poor women in rural areas running or interested in running a business in Uganda
- Contribution: bridging the gap between the evidence on graduation from poverty programs and the one on entrepreneurship training programs
  - ▶ But not all women are/wish to be entrepreneurs (only 13% in this setting)
  - ▶ Most poverty programs have a financial component (CT or UCT), which you do not have.
- Additional contributions:
  - ▶ Studying the effects of entrepreneurial programs on resilience for ultra-poor women
  - ▶ Studying the potential spillover effects on other ultra-poor entrepreneurial women targeted by the intervention

## Main Comments: Sample

- Women with an entrepreneurial interest in five different communities are rolled into the sample over a period of 15 months.
  - ▶ The fifth location is different:
    - ★ Implementation disrupted by COVID-19
    - ★ Endline is one year and not two years after the baseline
- How much do results differ when you drop the fifth location?
  - ▶ Consider only the first four locations. At least as a robustness check.

## Main Comments: Results

- Present the main effects of the program, then go onto the spillover effects.
- Table 2 (Skills):
  - ▶ Many outcome variables (e.g. tracking, price management, goal setting, etc.) are built combining multiple questions. How?
  - ▶ Locus of control: Build an index of standardized components or use the same methodology used for the other variables combining multiple questions.
  - ▶ Self-efficacy and aspirations regarding social status should be reported along all other skills in Table 2.
- Table 5 (Re-investment outcomes):
  - ▶ High variation in savings and assets: Can you consider an indicator variable as well (e.g. positive savings/assets in the last month)

## Main Comments: Spillover effects

- The measure of a woman's social network is only a partial network measure as the only individuals measured (via pictures) as part of her networks are the women in the sample
  - ▶ An individual's network is richer (e.g. it includes entrepreneurs and not)
- Stat. significant effects only for price management and own a business and it goes away when adding controls
  - ▶ What are the mechanisms at play here?
  - ▶ Do women in the T group share resources with women in the C? Can you test for this?
- Estimated average treatment effects (ATEs) are adjusted using spillovers only coming from business links.
  - ▶ This implies multiplying all estimated spillovers by 0.26 and add them to the estimated ATE. Has this adjustment been used in the past?
  - ▶ As the intervention uses individual randomization within a community, look at Comola and Prina (REStat 2021)

## Other Comments

- Unclear what are the soft skills being taught:
  - ▶ The program's content seems to be all on hard skills conducive to starting a business
  - ▶ Why should teaching entrepreneurial skills affect soft skills?
- What explains the low attendance to individualized coaching sessions?
- Highlight the differences between this paper and Lang and Seither (2022)
- Professional editing:
  - ▶ Grammar
  - ▶ Clarity of exposition