

Impact Opportunities 2: Can Social Protection Programs Build Skills and Raise Productivity?

Can Public Works Provide a Productive Safety Net for Youth in a Post-Conflict Context?

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Say I told you about a labor-intensive public works program in which:



1 member of each targeted poor household...

...can work for 50-75 days...



...and is paid an average of US\$1.75 per day



Would you jump to conclusions like these?

Program is too short and money too little to be meaningful

Program only hands out cash, doesn't help families invest in assets/economic activities

Families will not have enough money to invest in their children

The transfer will only benefit the household member receiving it

The conclusions I hope you will have reached by the end are:



1

Short-term public works programs can enable youth to enter into new economic activities.

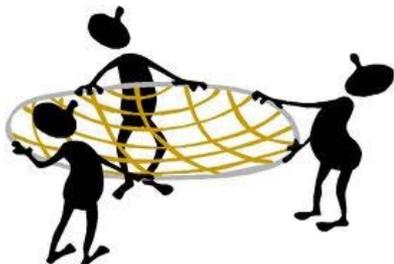


2

They can help youth participate more in savings groups and accumulate assets that can protect them against future shocks.

3

They can also have positive spillovers on other household members, empowering women and increasing children's access to health.



In sum, even short-term public works program can act as productive safety nets for youth!

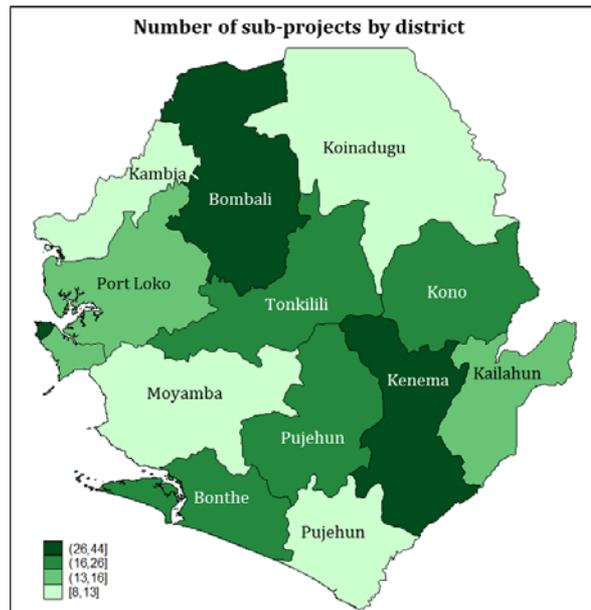
5 things you should know about the program and the IE

A Program name: Sierra Leone Cash for Work Program



C Program objective: create temporary employment for youth (ages 15-35)

B Coverage: national



D Program target (2010-2014):
 - 25,000 poor households
 - 1 person per household



E IE randomization process: subprojects divided into 2 groups



132 control



Do not get program in Round 1

We measure short-term impacts

143 treatment



Get program in Round 1

275 subprojects



Program had positive impacts on earnings & consumption...

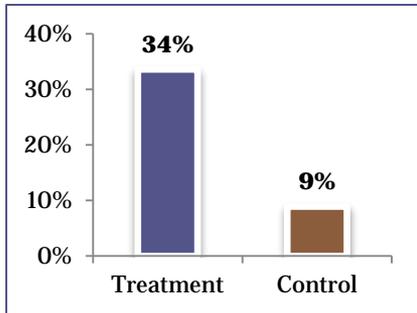


Cash and in kind payments 26% higher among treatment HHs (cash 17%)

HH spending on food (8%), hygiene products (15%), and home improvements (33%) increased



...and on economic activity, savings, & asset accumulation

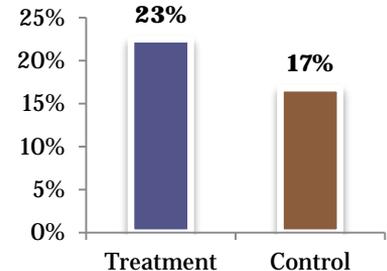


Treated HHs are nearly 4 times more likely to set up new enterprises

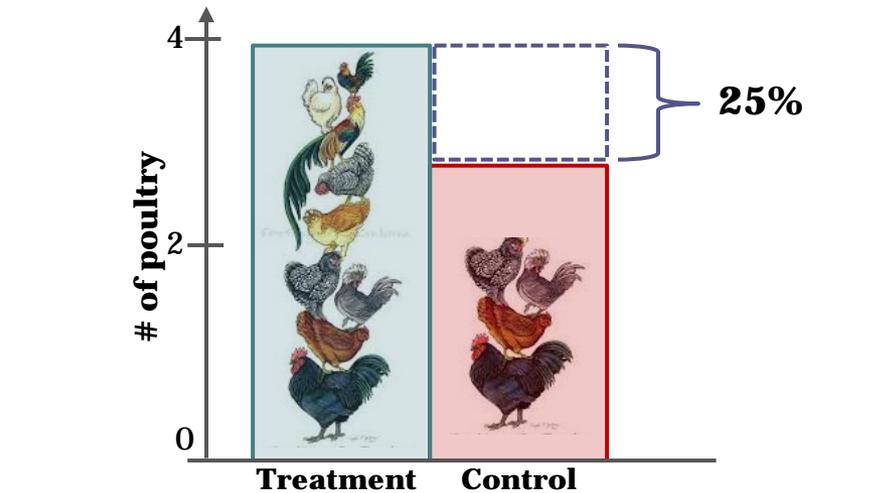


And they are 16% more likely to join informal savings groups

Treated households are 34% more likely to own goats or pigs

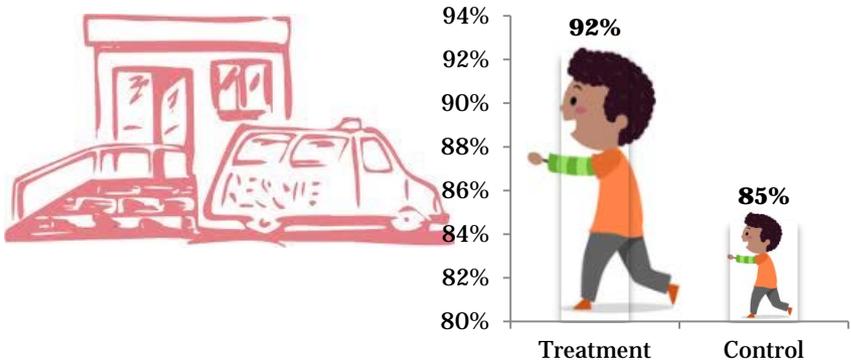


The number of poultry owned is 25% higher than the control group

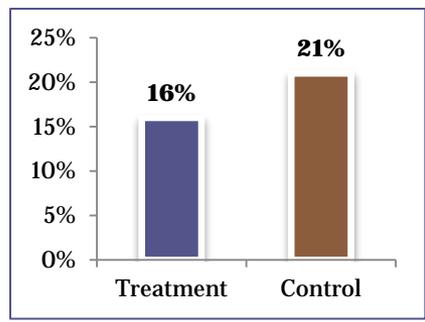


It also had spillovers on health & wellbeing of HH members

Boys 0-5 are **9% more likely to go a health facility when sick (23% overall)**



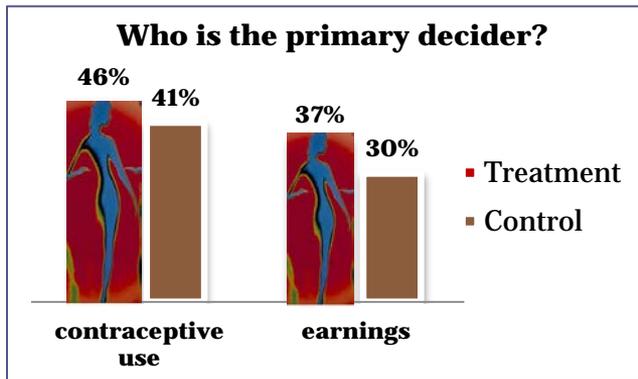
Incidence of domestic violence among females in treated HHs is **22% lower**



HH spending on medications increases **18%**

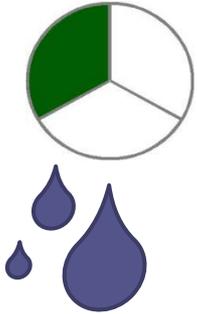


These women have more control over use of **contraceptives (11%) and earnings (26%)**



IE shows that it may be possible to enhance impacts

The program may not be reaching its full potential



- The increase in cash received was less than 1/3 of intended transfer
- 13% of workers were not registered beneficiaries
- Beneficiaries not the poorest HHs (higher substitution effects?)



- Female participation low (33%)
- 22% of female beneficiaries report taking their under 5 kids to the site



- No increase in HH savings found
- Training was low intensity, not uniformly implemented, and lacking clear objectives

But we think there are ways to enhance the impacts



1. Reduce rotation
2. Minimize risk of leakage through stronger community oversight and payment systems
3. Improve targeting mechanisms (reduce reliance on self-targeting)

1. Prioritize sub-project types with higher female participation
2. Provide adequate childcare arrangements on site

1. Match training content to specific constraints and objectives
2. Ensure training is conducted in a systematic and structured way

Have you now reached these conclusions?



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Thank You