

## **Effect of land reform and natural resource management (NRM) on educational security**

Community-driven watershed restoration initiatives have **large effects** on educational security, demonstrated by increased enrollment of girls in secondary education.

Geographical scope: Sub Saharan Africa

Effect: Large effect ( $g=0.383$ )

Confidence in study findings: Medium (1 study with 1 effect size)

### **Short Summary**

Community based watershed restoration initiatives in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) aimed to improve environmental security and household economic stability through sustainable farming, reforestation, and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). The intervention resulted in increased enrollment of girls in secondary education. However, the sustainability of these outcomes depends on continued community engagement and institutional support.

### **Long summary**

#### *The intervention*

The intervention involved sustainable farming training, reforestation, and community forest management implemented through VSLAs and partnerships with local institutions such as schools, churches, and mosques. It aimed to foster environmental restoration, economic resilience, and improved social outcomes, including educational security.

#### *How the intervention is expected to work*

The intervention is expected to improve educational security by increasing household economic stability through VSLAs, providing families with financial resources to support school-related expenses, especially for girls' secondary education. Improved agricultural productivity and income, combined with a stable and cooperative community environment, create favorable conditions for schooling and increased enrollment.

#### *The evidence base*

This cell includes one study which is set in Eastern Congo. Data were collected from 320 randomly selected households across the two watersheds.

#### *Evidence findings*

The community-based watershed restoration initiative led to positive changes in educational security, with a significant increase in the number of girls enrolled in secondary school within the treatment watershed.

#### *Included studies*

**Sabin (2019)** evaluates the impact of a community-based watershed restoration initiative in Eastern Congo, assessing its environmental, economic, and social outcomes. Using a mixed-methods approach, including difference-in-differences (DID) analysis, participatory workshops, and remote sensing data, the study compares two watersheds—one receiving the intervention and the other serving as a control. The intervention involved establishing Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), promoting sustainable farming practices, and strengthening community leadership networks to encourage environmental restoration. Households reported an increase in investment in education, with a higher proportion of girls attending secondary school ( $p < 0.01$ ). The study is rated medium due to its partial description of the evaluation questions.

#### *Confidence Assessment*

Overall low: The overall rating is low due to limited number of studies.

#### **Other outcomes in the study:**

Social cohesion / willingness to participate or help

Human security / economic security

Human security / food security and nutrition & health security

Human security / environmental security