Trust, trust attitudes and group participation in rural development activities

M. Alexandra Peralta and Robert Shupp

Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics
Michigan State University

contact: peralta3@msu.edu


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A total of eight sessions— one session in each village— were conducted during May of 2012 with between 17 and 22 farmers participating in each session, for a total of 153 participants. Farmer-participants were recruited randomly from lists of farmers participating in A4N groups and from lists of farmers with similar socio-economic characteristics and livelihoods in non-A4N villages.

**Results**

**Stated trust (survey questions)**

Figure 1. Respondents agreement with the statements in the WVS and village-level survey questions.

**Revealed trust (trust game)**

Figure 2. Proportion sent and proportion return by participants in the trust game.

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**Introduction**

Groups are formed and encouraged by development projects to promote interventions and to disseminate information. When this strategy is used questions arise on whether more trusting or trustworthy individuals self-select into forming these groups or if frequent interaction among group participants leads to higher levels of trust and cooperation.

**Objectives**

We use survey questions and lab-based experimental trust game to investigate whether farmers involved in group-based interventions promoted by a rural development project in Nicaragua, “Agriculture for Basic Needs” (A4N), reveal different levels of trust than farmers who were not exposed to the A4N group interventions.

**Conclusions**

- Participants in the A4N group-based interventions are not more trusting. Contrary to Etang, Fieldman & Knowles (2011) in Cameroon.
  - Possible explanations:
    - Motivations, such as receiving project benefits, drive the decisions of individuals to join groups.
    - Trust might increase due to group participation, but we do not observe this in A4N groups with 2 years of formation or less.
    - Further research in the impacts of group-based interventions on trust should be considered in project impact evaluation.

**References**
