



TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO ACTION

# **ATAI PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE**

9 - 10 May 2013



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*Poverty Action Lab*



## RESEARCHER BREAKOUT

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ATAI Partnership Development Conference – May  
2013

1. ATAI Researcher Brainstorming Conference, February 2013
2. Summary of Potential Partners
3. SPIA Research Priorities and Plans

# ATAI Brainstorming Conference: Background



## ■ ATAI lacks research in four areas:

1. Credit markets
2. Risk markets
3. Information
4. Externalities
5. Input and output markets
6. Labor markets
7. Land markets

# ATAI Brainstorming Conference: Objectives



- Identify important questions that can be answered rigorously within each neglected area
- What are the methodological challenges we face in answering these questions?
- Can these questions be answered using RCTs, or are other approaches superior
- Identify potential research designs that we can try to match with implementers to test

# ATAI Brainstorming Conference: Outcomes



- Discussions focused on:
  1. Rural Labor Markets
  2. Environmental Impacts
  3. Behavioral Marketing
  4. Supply Chains

# Rural Labor Markets



- Is this a constraint on technology adoption?
- Few interventions designed specifically to address labor market imperfections
- We don't understand enough about how labor responds to different technologies
  - ▣ Potential to add labor modules to existing studies

# Environmental impacts



- Many potential interventions that can be randomized
- Hard to measure outcomes, long time horizons
- Collecting more data, improved ways to measure



# Behavioral Marketing



- Keen practitioner interest
  - particularly tech developers
- Many technologies have attributes where behavioral issues like to be important
  - Quality assurance (counterfeiting, trust issues)
  - Hidden traits (e.g. nutrients and drought tolerance)
  - Consumption traits which may be valuable (e.g. taste)

# Behavioral Marketing



- Potential research opportunities
  - Information— e.g. testing saturation models
  - Bundling services—hidden vs. nonhidden
  - Understanding how people learn about (hidden) attributes, e.g. measuring attitudes throughout crop cycle
  - Using branding to overcome trust issues

# Supply Chains



- Design of contracts: limited commitment, asymmetric info
- Assuring quality of inputs and outputs
  - through certification
  - through price signals
- Passing through of prices, credit, information
  - Integration of information, credit etc

## ■ Research Challenges

- Size of value chains
- Distribution of benefits: do richer farmers mainly benefit from supply chain improvements
- Persistence, trust, relationships

## ■ Potential Research Opportunities

- Randomize contracts, information
- Intermediaries—often a large number of intermediaries

# Brainstorming to Matchmaking



- ATAI used the discussions from the brainstorming conference as a launching point for this conference
- Focused on bring implementers who had:
  - Interest in randomized evaluations
  - Large capacity, ie many projects in different countries
  - Interest in behavioral marketing and value chains
  - Suppliers/developers of improved seeds and other technologies
    - Can help researchers identify technologies with the traits they are interested in examining

# Implementing Organizations



- 17 organizations
- 20-30 potential project ideas
- Much interest in randomized evaluations
  - ▣ Some with field experience
- Some with funding for research

# Implementers by Type



## ■ CGIAR

- CIMMYT
- IFPRI
- HarvestPlus
- IITA
- IRRI
- SPIA

## ■ Multilateral

- AfDB
- ADB
- IFAD
- World Bank

## ■ Large Scale Implementers

- ADRA
- BRAC (Uganda and Bangladesh)
- Heifer
- Land O'Lakes
- Oxfam
- Save the Children

## ■ Private Sector

- Acumen
- Syngenta
- TANGO

# Implementers Regional Focus



- East Africa: Acumen, ADRA, CIMMTY, Heifer, IFPRI, IITA, Land O'Lakes, Oxfam, Save the Children, Syngenta
- West Africa: AfDB, IFPRI, IFAD, IITA, Oxfam, Save the Children, Syngenta
- South Asia: Acumen, BRAC, IFPRI, IRRI, Syngenta
- Southeast Asia: ADB, Oxfam, Syngenta
- Latin America: Acumen, ADRA, IFPRI, Syngenta



# Implementers Country Focus



- Ethiopia: Acumen, CIMMYT, IFPRI, Oxfam, Save the Children
- Kenya: Acumen, Land O'Lakes, Syngenta
- Liberia: AfDB
- Sierra Leone: IFAD, IITA
- Tanzania: Heifer, IITA, Land O'Lakes, Syngenta
- Uganda: IFPRI, Land O'Lakes
- Bangladesh: BRAC, IFPRI, IRRI, Syngenta
- India: IFPRI, India, Syngenta
- Pakistan: Acumen, IFPRI

# Implementer Technology



## ■ Crops/Production

- Cassava
- Dairy
- Legume
- Maize
- Rice
- Banana
- Vegetables
- Cowpea

## ■ Technologies

- Agricultural management
- Certification/Contracts
- Extension
- Farmer organizations
- Improved seed/animal
- Mobile Technology
- Starter kits

# Implementer Research Focus



- ATAI constraints that interest implementers
  - Credit (1 1)
  - Information (1 2)
  - Input and Output Markets (1 2)
  - Less so: Risk (6), Externalities (5), Labor (1) [ADRA]
- Focus on this conference...
  - Behavioral Marketing (1 1), Environmental Impacts (6), Value Chains (1 2)

# Implementer Recommendations



## ■ Behavioral Marketing

- Acumen
- CIMMYT
- IFPRI – HarvestPlus
- Syngenta

## ■ Nutrition

- Asian Development Bank
- IFPRI – HarvestPlus

## ■ Value Chains

- ADRA
- Heifer (Co-operatives)
- IITA (Contracts and Certification)
- Land O'Lakes (Co-operatives)
- Syngenta

# Discussions with Implementers



- Start with the big picture
- Try and avoid technical jargon
  - ▣ Same word may mean different things to different people/disciplines
- Most projects ideas fail at the sample size hurdle
- Beware multiple layer implementation
- Be a good listener

# SPIA

*James Stevenson*

# CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment

Presentation to ATAI Partner Development Conference

James Stevenson SPIA Secretariat



Standing Panel on Impact Assessment



# CGIAR Standing Panel on Impact Assessment (SPIA)



**Doug  
Gollin**  
SPIA Chair



**Karen  
Macours**  
SPIA  
Associate



**Erwin  
Bulte**  
SPIA  
Associate



**Tim Kelley**  
SPIA  
Secretariat



**James  
Stevenson**  
SPIA  
Secretariat

SPIA established late 1990s

Part of CGIAR Independent Science and Partnership Council

Mandate for *ex-post* impact assessment: main reporting line is to the donors to CGIAR

From 2013 – 2015 we have a major increase in our funding to strengthen evidence base in a number of areas (BMGF, DFID)



# SPIA's RCT portfolio

SPIA commissioned paper by Alain de Janvry, Andrew Dustan and Elizabeth Sadoulet in 2010 on methodology

Karen Macours (ATAI member) now leading on RCTs for SPIA

Strategy is a mix of the following:

- 1) **Bridge between economists and agricultural researchers** – eg. IRRI and Elizabeth Sadoulet collaboration on flood-resistant rice in India; Cassava varieties in Ghana with IITA and Chris Udry / IPA
- 2) **Annual fund for pilots** – e.g. Tavneet Suri in Sierra Leone on NERICA rice; Marieke Kleemans in India on Drought-tolerant rice
- 3) **Fund for studies** (co-financing with ATAI / 3ie) – Perhaps \$1.2 million in 2013-2015
- 4) **Consulting / capacity-building with CGIAR researchers** – Why have there not been more RCTs funded of CGIAR technologies? What can we do to help see more take off?

Possible joint calls? Post-doc program of ATAI-SPIA post-docs?

# Issues to discuss with ATAI researchers

- External validity and timing of the evaluation
  - How can results from RCTs be used for *ex-post* purposes given heterogeneity of treatment effects and equilibrium effects?
  - Expensive way of estimating a Griliches k-shift (and also not very academically interesting) so need to find studies that address wider questions as well
  - How do we best identify “promising” technologies to reduce the risk of funding studies of technologies that never really take off?
- How far can we go towards dependent variables that donors really care about? Studies that break off a segment of the causal chain to:
  - Poverty
  - Nutrition
  - Environmental outcomes
- Natural resource management technologies / Value chain interventions
- Placebo effects (e.g. Bulte paper with blinded RCT seed provision)