



INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON
OSTROM WORKSHOP

COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Kelsey Jack

*UC Santa Barbara, Bren School of Environmental
Science & Management*

Monday, January 31: 12:00 – 1:00 pm ET

Harvesting the Rain: The Adoption of Environmental Technologies in the Sahel



Many agricultural and environmental technologies require large upfront investments in exchange for longer-term benefits. This time profile of costs and benefits makes adoption particularly sensitive to liquidity and credit constraints, which are prevalent in low-income settings. We test the importance of these barriers to the adoption of an agricultural technique that helps reduce land degradation and restore soil fertility in Niger. We find little evidence that liquidity or credit constraints deter adoption: instead, providing farmers with training increases the share of adopters by over 90 percentage points, whereas adding conditional or unconditional cash transfers has no additional effect. Adoption increases agricultural output, reduces land turnover and leads to adoption spillovers up to three years after treatment. These results imply that training can be a cost-effective and scalable means of promoting the adoption of profitable technologies.

Kelsey Jack does research at the intersection of environmental and development economics, with a focus on how individuals, households, and communities impact and are impacted by the environment. She uses field experiments to test theory and new policy innovations in numerous countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Jack joined the Bren School at UCSB after seven years as an Assistant Professor in the Economics Department at Tufts University and a postdoc position at MIT. She is the director of the Poverty Alleviation group at the Environmental Markets Lab (emLab) at UCSB, co-chair of the Energy, Environment and Climate Change sector at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at MIT and an Associate Editor at the American Economic Review. She holds a bachelors degree from Princeton University and a PhD from Harvard University. Before graduate school, she spent two years in Lao PDR working for IUCN.

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