

Know Your Rights! A Field Experiment on Legal Knowledge, Property Rights and Investment in Kenya

Matthieu Chemin

McGill University

Knowledge of the legal institutions matters for them to have an effect. In this paper, we design a legal training program informed by 5 years of fieldwork for another project (Aberra and Chemin, 2020), in which a team of Kenyan lawyers defended the land rights of small-scale farmers in court. During this fieldwork, the Kenyan lawyers discovered that the main reason for disputes was that people had not properly implemented the processes of succession or buying / selling land, and therefore never got an official title for their land. The goal of the training program is to anticipate these issues in court by providing a better explanation of these two processes. We find that this increases legal knowledge, the security of property rights and investment. The legal program also reduces the number of cases filed in courts, thereby indirectly benefiting all other court users through faster courts.