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**Gender
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Lab**



Tradition Matters:

Experimental Evidence from Gender-Sensitive Cash Grants and Trainings in Tunisia

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Motivation

- **Gender based discrimination** in the labor market is pervasive.
 - This is particularly salient in the Middle East and Northern Africa.
- **Cash grants and training programs** to stimulate entrepreneurship find **little effect female beneficiaries**, but sizeable positive effects on male counterparts.
 - See e.g. De Mel et al. 2008; Klinger and Schundeln 2011; Fafchamps et al. 2014; Berge et al. 2015; Bernhardt et al. 2019; Gine and Mansuri 2021).
- **Women face extra gender-specific constraints**, including:
 - **Higher risk of expropriation** by other household members and peers (De Mel et al. 2009; Jakiela and Ozier 2016; Bernhardt et al. 2019; Riley 2020)
 - **Gender-related norms and beliefs** on the **roles** that women should and should not play (Field et al. 2010; Alesina et al. 2013; Bertrand et al. 2015; Bursztyn et al. 2020; Delecourt and Fitzpatrick 2021).

Motivation

- **We ask:**

- Can provision of **unconditional grants** combined with **financial training** address women's financial and human capital constraints?
- Can providing **gender dialogue** sessions address gender-related norms and limit the risk of expropriation of grants by husbands and other household members?

- **Context of the study:**

- Rural Tunisia (Jendouba governorate), one of the poorest governorates in Tunisia.
- Randomized controlled trial targeting poor women.
- Two interventions: (1) cash grants and financial training and (2) gender dialogue sessions

Context

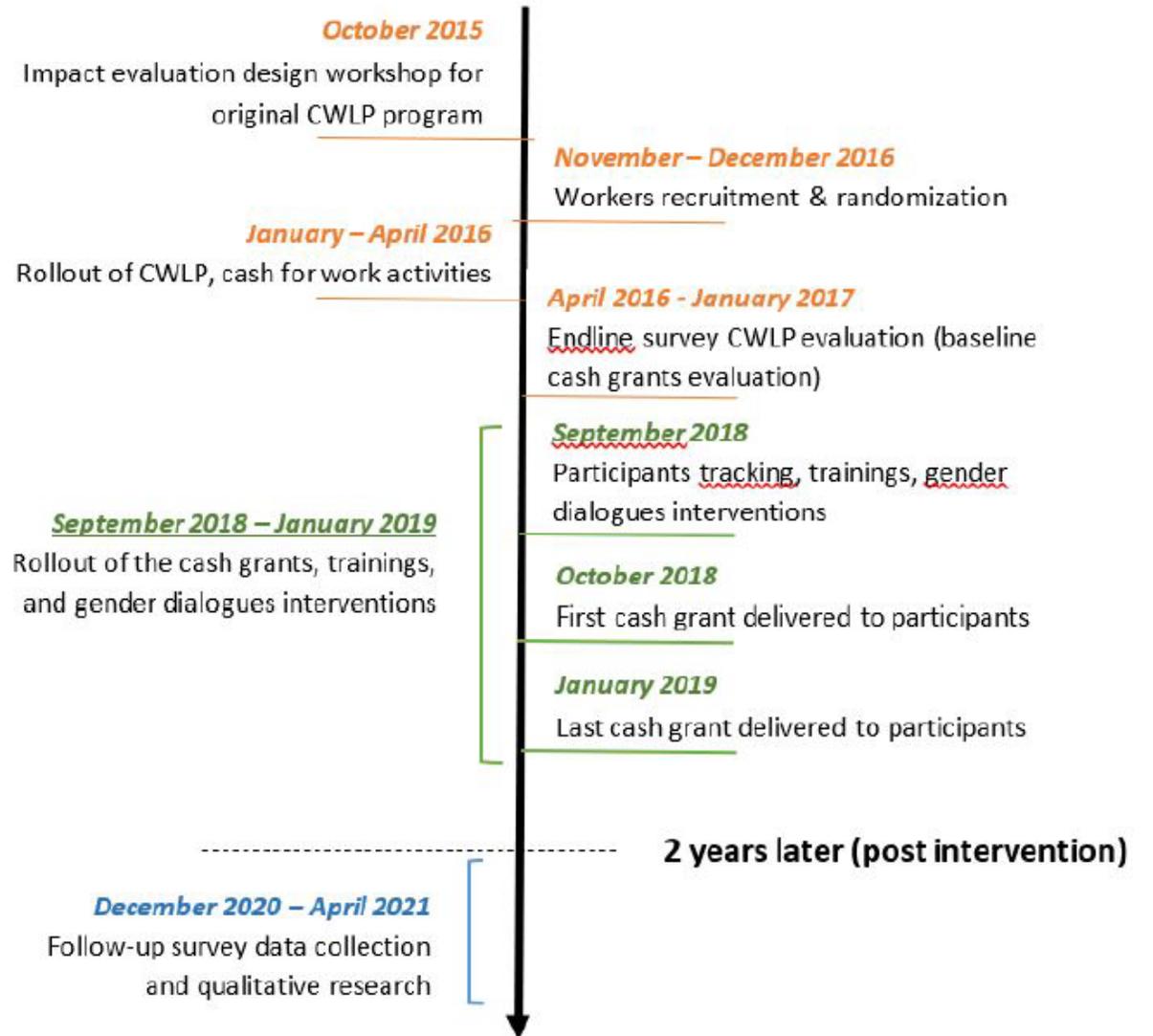
- Jendouba governorate in rural Tunisia.
 - Important gender gap in labor force participation in Tunisia (24.3% for women vs 70.6% for men).
- Our RCT targeted 2000 women in 80 rural Imadas.
- Study sample taken from another study (CWLP)
- Data from 2014 census:
 - 37% of the adult population of rural Jendouba was economically active.
 - 48% of household heads had no education
- Baseline data from 2016:
 - Daily consumption per capita = TND 9 (USD 4)
 - 18% of households owned land
 - 49% of households owned livestock (usually goats or chickens)



Data and Timeline

Data sources:

1. Baseline survey - 2000 participants:
Questions on household composition, economic activities, assets, consumption, female agency, subjective wellbeing, mental health, migration, economic shocks, and coping strategies
2. Endline survey - 1824 participants:
Similar survey modules as baseline + a COVID-19 module
3. Qualitative survey – 70 semi-structured interviews



Study design

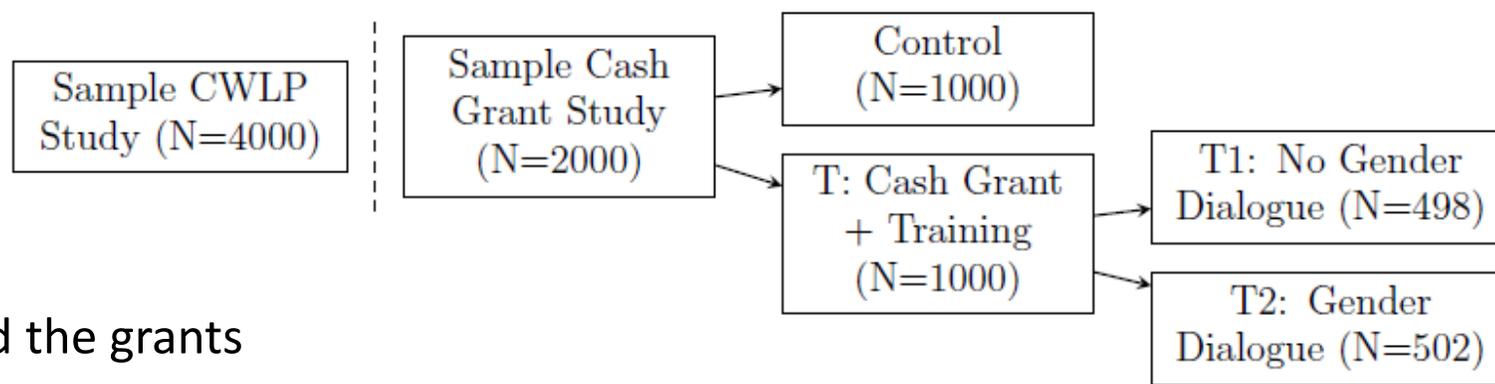
Randomized controlled trial with two treatments:

Treatment 1: Cash grants and financial training:

- TND 634 (USD 768 in PPP terms)
- 1000 women randomly selected
- 3-day financial training

Treatment 2: Gender dialogue

- Financial training with male partner
- 500 women among those who received the grants
- Based on evidence from Gupta et al. (2013)



Results

1. Overwhelmingly positive impacts of the cash grant and training program:

- Positive effects on household **consumption & asset ownership**.
- Positive effects on **women's access to finance, subjective well-being, and mental health**.

2. The intervention do not significantly impact traditional norms:

- The cash grant and training program did not significantly impact **women entrepreneurship**.
- The interventions did not improve **female agency** in the household.
- Instead, we find positive effects on **agriculture and livestock farming**, two activities traditionally undertaken by women.
- And we find positive effects on the **IGAs of other household members**.
- We find some evidence that the **gender-dialogue sessions may have backfired**.

Conclusion

3. Lessons for policy and research:

- **Cash grants and training** do positively affect economic outcomes but may not change traditional gender roles.
- **Gender dialogue sessions** had little impacts (if anything, it backfired).
- Importance of **redistribution and expropriation mechanisms** within households.
- **Changing traditional norms** requires different or more intensive interventions.

Thank you

Questions & feedback welcome:
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