

Can Business Training Work? Evidence on personal initiative training from Togo

Abstract

Standard business training programs aim to boost the incomes of the millions of self-employed business owners around the world by teaching them basic financial and marketing practices, yet the impacts of such programs are mixed. We test whether a psychology-based personal initiative training approach which focuses on proactive, self-starting behavior can have more success. A randomized controlled trial assigned microenterprise owners to a control group, a more standard leading business training program, or to personal initiative training. Across a spectrum of business outcomes, the personal initiative training performs better, especially for female entrepreneurs.