

Integrating Gender into Causal Impact Assessments: understanding the scope of causal impact assessments and how to incorporate gender effectively

DRAFT VERSION

Overview

This course introduces participants to the fundamentals of impact assessments, with a particular focus on causal impact assessments and their role in attributing observed changes to a given innovation, program or intervention. Participants will explore the scope of impact assessments, distinguishing them from other assessment types, and will explore the unique scope of causal impact assessments and the difference between attribution and contribution.

The course provides an overview of key quantitative methodologies for causal impact assessments, including experimental and quasi-experimental approaches. A strong emphasis is placed on integrating gender and sub-group analysis into causal impact assessments.

Participants will also improve their knowledge on how to integrate gender into Theory of Changes to inform the scope of an impact assessment. We will also discuss how monitoring and impact assessments complement each other in guiding implementation and assessing results.

Objectives

- Define the scope of impact assessment and understand what sets impact assessments—especially causal impact assessments—apart from other assessment types, including the distinction between attribution and contribution to observed changes.
- Understand how monitoring and impact assessment complement each other and serve distinct purposes in guiding implementation and evaluation.
- Provide an overview of quantitative methodologies (experimental and quasi-experimental) used in causal impact assessments.
- Learn effective strategies for integrating sub-group analysis (e.g., gender) into monitoring and evaluation.

Content

Foundations of impact assessments (Week 1)

- Understanding the objectives of impact assessments, with a focus on causal impact assessments.
- Clarifying the differences and the unique role of causal impact assessments in demonstrating causality and being able to attribute changes to a project/intervention/innovation.
- Exploring the types of questions addressed by descriptive, analytical, and causal impact assessments.

Monitoring and Impact Assessment (Week 2)

- Distinguishing monitoring from impact assessment and understanding how they complement each other.
- The critical role of a well-designed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework in supporting and enhancing impact assessments.
- Exploring how M&E and impact assessment contribute to refining and validating the Theory of Change.
- Building a clear theory of change to inform impact assessments.

Overview of Impact Assessment Methodologies (Week 2 and Week 3)

- Quantitative Impact Assessment Methodologies
 - Causal Approaches:
 - Experimental methods (e.g., Randomized Controlled Trials).
 - Quasi-experimental methods, including Differences-in-Differences, Regression Discontinuity, Instrumental Variables, and Propensity Score Matching.
 - Non-Causal Approaches: Methods for assessing contribution rather than attribution.
- Mixed-Methods Approaches:
 - Combining qualitative and quantitative methods to enhance analysis.
 - Exploring their complementarity and the distinct questions they address, particularly for gender and social inclusion.

Integrating sub-group analysis (e.g., gender) into monitoring and impact assessments (Week 4)

- Designing effective sampling strategies to ensure both statistical representation and robust sub-group analysis, with a focus on gender.
- Designing a clear Theory of Change to identify expected differential changes across sub-groups and selecting appropriate indicators to capture these variations.
- Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics and differential impacts.

Methodology

The course will take place over four consecutive weeks, with two 90-minute sessions per week (i.e., 3 hours per week), for a total of 12 hours. The sessions will combine theoretical and practical components. In the theoretical sessions, the trainer will introduce the basic concepts related to each topic and provide practical examples to illustrate them. During the practical sessions, participants will work on short assignments that will be developed and discussed during class. There will be no homework assignments.

Slide decks and materials will be publicly available. Recordings will be available ONLY for those registered for the course.

Schedule

Mondays and Wednesdays from 4pm-5:30pm (EAT)

Start date: March 3-2025

End date: March 26-2025

Target Audience

This course is for those working at the intersection of gender and agri-food systems, focusing on the design, implementation, and assessment of innovations/interventions. While not highly technical, a basic knowledge of statistics is recommended. Participants from CGIAR and beyond, including NARES professionals, researchers, and practitioners interested in causal impact assessments are invited.

Trainer

Diana Lopez-Avila is the Senior Scientist for Gender and Impact Assessment at the CGIAR Gender and Social Inclusion Accelerator, where she supports research to promote gender equality across CGIAR centers. A development economist with a PhD from the Paris School of Economics, Diana has over 10 years of experience in applied microeconomics, impact evaluation, and evidence-based policies. She has worked in Latin America, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, with fieldwork in Colombia, India, Haiti, and Mauritania. Her background includes roles at the World Bank's Africa Gender Innovation Lab, Colombia's National Planning Department, and the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, as well as academic positions in microeconomics and applied economics.