Implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on impact evaluation activities in East-Africa


Rapid survey to better understand the effects of COVID-19 on impact evaluators in East Africa. A total of 71 respondents from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Rwanda participated in the survey between April 9 -24:

- The survey shows that evaluation research has been seriously disrupted in East Africa
- The vast majority of evaluation researchers (87%) have stopped all in-person field work, although a slight majority (51%) were still conducting research via the internet
- Most (64%) respondents reported that all meetings were now taking place online
- Two thirds of respondents reported new delays or other issues in their collaborations, and a quarter of respondents have already seen funding delayed
- Most respondents expect fewer funding opportunities in the future
1. Safeguarding and ethical aspect

- [https://www.3ieimpact.org/blogs/phone-surveys-developing-countries-need-abundance-caution](https://www.3ieimpact.org/blogs/phone-surveys-developing-countries-need-abundance-caution)
2. The research and methods aspect

- **Share!** Effect estimates are not the only valuable thing! The data you collect can have real value to governments and implementers.
  - National Rural Livelihoods program, India

- **Mitigate!** On the ground collection of data infeasible: carefully monitor the state of program implementation and overall situation to retain the validity of research when you can resume
  - Aquaculture program, Bangladesh

- **Adapt!** Can you work better with your local partners? Can you do virtual fields visits? Can you do the survey by telephone?
  - Sustainable Livelihoods program, Philippines

- **Innovate!** Use alternative sources of data, e.g. big data
The map
## Included studies across data sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Number of Impact Evaluations</th>
<th>Number of Measurement Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human-Sourced Data</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Networks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Searches</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Data Content</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Reporting or Crowdsourced Data</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process-Mediated Data</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Produced by Public Agencies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Produced By Businesses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Phone Call Record Details</td>
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<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Machine-Generated Data</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data from Fixed Sensors</td>
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<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data from Mobile Sensors (Tracking)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data from Satellites</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key findings

• Satellite images and mobile call detail records are the most used big data sources.

• The development themes studied the most include:
  – Environmental sustainability
  – Economic development and livelihoods
  – Urban development
  – Health and well-being
  – Energy, industry and infrastructure provision

• While there are a number of studies that have used big data for measuring various development outcomes, there are not many impact evaluations that have used these innovative big data-based outcome measures.

• This indicates the opportunity for incorporating big data measures in impact evaluations to measure the impact at higher frequency and granularity.
3. Better use of existing evidence

- Use existing evidence better and creatively!
- [https://developmentevidence.3ieimpact.org/](https://developmentevidence.3ieimpact.org/)
  - 3759 IEs; 730 SRs; 20 EGMs
- #2020Hindsight campaign: e.g. handwashing blog
  [https://www.3ieimpact.org/blogs/how-get-people-wash-their-hands](https://www.3ieimpact.org/blogs/how-get-people-wash-their-hands)
- Explosion of COVID-19 focused research (and duplication of efforts) requires systematic reviews
  (Campbell, IDCG/3ie)
- Evidence Synthesis Response to the ongoing global crisis: 3ie /Africa Centre for Evidence (ACE)
  /Global Evidence Synthesis Initiative (GESI)
  [https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2DH7QGM](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2DH7QGM)