

The Importance of Impact Analysis



Jessore, Bangladesh, 2012

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Background



- USAID FtF projects aim to create impact at scale
- Focus tends to be on ready, proven, off the shelf technologies and interventions.

— Are they really?

Background



- The evidence for impact is often based on:
 - Researcher managed trials
 - Small-scale on-farm pilots
 - Studies from other countries
 - Studies outside ZOI in the same country

Background



- We often find ourselves promoting technologies about which we are confident that they are good, but without having sound evidence that they really are.
- We often find ourselves promoting research areas about which we are confident that they are good, but without having sound evidence for impact:
 - What is the evidence that horticulture empowers women?
 - That it create job opportunities for youth?
 - That it contributes to improved nutrition of children?

Background



- Most FtF indicators are not measures of impact.
- Impact evaluations measure the change in a development outcome that is **attributable** to a defined intervention; ... require a credible and rigorously defined counterfactual to control for factors other than the intervention that might account for the observed change.” [USAID Evaluation Policy, 2011]

Why do impact analysis?



- To improve our intervention designs.
- To be accountable for positive/negative impact.
- To share with other research and scaling partners.
- To inform policy-making.

Example: Horticulture Bangladesh Project



Impact of training in off-season tomato production in Bangladesh, 2014



Outcome indicator	Impact (ATE)	Sign.	% increase
Total income (USD/capita)	85.9	$p < 0.05$	50.5
Pesticide use (kg/ha)	2.0	$p < 0.05$	58.4

Schreinemachers, P., Wu, M.-h., Uddin, M.N., Ahmad, S., Hanson, P., 2016. Farmer training in off-season vegetables: Effects on income and pesticide use in Bangladesh. Food Policy 61, 132-140.

Why do impact analysis?



The USAID FtF projects offer an ideal opportunity for robust impact assessment:

- Target numbers are usually large.
- Phased introduction of technologies often creates suitable counterfactuals.
- A 5% budget allocation is are usually large enough to do a quality impact assessment.

Why do impact analysis?



Moreover:

- IA could be done together with the USAID Innovation Labs as research partners.
- Results of any IA can support the local USAID Missions in their communication efforts and decision-making.

Ongoing IAs of USAID-funded home garden programs



Country	RCT Design	Research Partners	Baseline Survey	Endline Survey
1. Bangladesh*		IGZ (Germany)	May 2012	May 2013 (1 st) May 2016 (2 nd)
2. Cambodia	×	Tufts University	Dec. 2017	Dec. 2018
3. Kenya	×	JKUAT	March 2016	March 2018
4. Liberia	×	CARI	-	-
5. Mali		IFPRI	July 2016	July 2017
6. Tanzania	×	HORTI-Tengeru	Nov. 2015	Nov. 2017
7. Uganda	×	Makerere University	March 2016	March 2018

* Main project has ended.

You can't evaluate everything ...



“In order to justify the technical and financial resources to conduct an impact evaluation of an FTF program intervention, the following questions must be answered regarding the intervention”:

1. Is the intervention **INNOVATIVE**?
2. Is the intervention **REPLICABLE**?
3. Is the intervention **STRATEGICALLY RELEVANT**?
4. Is the intervention **UNTESTED**?
5. Is the intervention **INFLUENCIAL**?

[USAID Evaluation Policy, 2011]

Lessons learned



- Need to be strategic in the use of impact evaluation.
- Need to incorporate in the project design/PMP.
- Need for strong local partners and preferably also international partners.
- Not all interventions/technologies are easy to evaluate (e.g. value chain and postharvest interventions).
- Not every evaluation needs to be a randomized controlled trial.

Conclusion



- Impact analysis is important, and particularly so for horticultural technologies/interventions as there is a lack of evidence for impact.
- The USAID FtF development projects create an excellent opportunity for good impact studies and collaboration with Innovation Labs and Missions.