



RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS IN THEIR APPLICATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESEARCH

WEBINAR – Second Call

December 4 and 11, 4:00 to 5:30 pm (East Africa Time)

This year's Nobel Prize in economics¹ was awarded to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Michael Kremer. They were the leading scholars introducing Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) as a strategy to improve the evidence of causal mechanisms in empirical economics. RCTs have had a profound and wide-reaching impact on economics. The principle underlying RCTs is straightforward. Still, their implementation is not, a comprehensive understanding of this methodology is required if one is to critically assess the results of its application. With this purpose, we will be conducting a Webinar in which will provide a short but thorough introduction to this methodological strategy as it has been developed in the last decades in economics.

Goal: By the end of this Webinar, the participants will be critical consumers of top socio-economic research implementing RCT methodologies. They will understand the principles that lie behind it, the gains of using these methods as well as their challenges and limitations.

Preview of the sessions:

1st Session “The nut and bolts of RCTs”: We will start from the idea of a counterfactual as the basis for empirically identifying causality effects. We will explore how randomization can help constructing it, why it works, and how to implement it. Statistical Power and the challenges to proper causality identification (e.g. non-compliance, spillovers) will also be reviewed.

2nd Session “RCTs in the real world”: We will review examples of this methodology being soundly applied by top scholars to diverse economic questions. We will understand the reasons for using their particular implementation strategy and how it correspond to their question and context of application, the way the method is presented, and the way in which their results should be interpreted.

Dates and time investment:

The two Webinar sessions will take place on Wednesday, 4th and Wednesday, 11th of December 2019. We will be using either Skype or a similar technology².

Requirements:

- Knowledge of statistics, including statistical tests. Knowledge of econometrics is preferred but not required.
- Availability to invest four (4) hours to go to preparatory material before the first session, and four (4) hours to work on assignments between the first and the second session.
- A good internet connection in a quiet place. We recommend using headphones and a microphone.

Instructors:

- Professor Timo Goeschl, Ph.D.
- Jun. Professor Dr. Florian Diekert.
- Dr. Santiago Gómez-Cardona.

To participate, write to: santiago.gomez@awi.uni-heidelberg.de, please provide a short description of your interests and background; that will help us to better tailor the contents of the course.

¹ <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2019/press-release/>

² We will contact the participants to arrange the details of their connection.