Improving Impact Evaluation Designs for Peace and Conflict Programming:
Methodological Approaches Before, During, and After Program Implementation

Keith B. Ives, Causal Design
Jon Kurtz, Mercy Corps
Prologue

Before

During

After
Prologue
Shifting the narrative from, “It’s not feasible” to
“How do we innovate to make it happen?”

Before

During

After
Words of Wisdom

- “I don't know what they want from me; It's like the more money we come across; The more problems we see.”
  - Notorious B.I.G.

- “Don’t tell me what I can’t do!”
  - John Locke
Always Go for Gold
(but know what gold looks like for you)
Prologue
Shifting the narrative from, “It’s not feasible” to “How do we innovate to make it happen?”

Before
Use administrative and baseline data to explore assumptions; get creative to construct a counterfactual!

During

After
These things take too long!

Aging researchers

Shoot, we’d better hurry up and figure this out.
Getting Control of Control Groups

I told you that you weren’t coming with us, Nicole! Mom and Dad are using you as the control group. They want to see if taking kids on vacation makes them happier as adults.
Power Team Pro Tips!

● Clusters: Power from communities - not individuals
  ○ 10x more (Schochet 2008)
  ○ ~30 Rule of thumb

● Stratify & Match (McKenzie 2008)
  ○ As few as 6 Clusters! (Deke 2016)
  ○ More power & better sub-group voice

● ANCOVA
  ○ FREE POWER! (McKenzie 2012)
Prologue
Shifting the narrative from, “It’s not feasible” to “How do we innovate to make it happen?”

Before
Use administrative and baseline data to explore assumptions; get creative to construct a counterfactual!

During
Design impact evaluations to inform adaptive management; use innovative survey techniques to get reliable data on sensitive issues.

After
Impact Evaluations Tie Us Down
Everybody Lies - and other biases
Prologue
Shifting the narrative from, “It’s not feasible” to
“How do we innovate to make it happen?”

Before
Use administrative and baseline data to explore assumptions;
get creative to construct a counterfactual!

During
Design impact evaluations to inform adaptive management;
use innovative survey techniques to get reliable data on sensitive issues.

After
Leverage quasi-experimental approaches, employ econometric ‘fixes’;
and prepare for surprising – or disappointing – results.
Ex-post designs and techniques
What if we don’t find an impact?

...and this is where we put the non-significant results.
Conclusion
When in doubt, call an economist

-What you a doctor of?
- Economics.