



# Running Randomized Evaluations: A Practical Guide

By Rachel Glennerster, Kudzai Takavarasha

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**Running Randomized Evaluations: A Practical Guide** By Rachel Glennerster, Kudzai Takavarasha

This book provides a comprehensive yet accessible guide to running randomized impact evaluations of social programs. Drawing on the experience of researchers at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, which has run hundreds of such evaluations in dozens of countries throughout the world, it offers practical insights on how to use this powerful technique, especially in resource-poor environments.

This step-by-step guide explains why and when randomized evaluations are useful, in what situations they should be used, and how to prioritize different evaluation opportunities. It shows how to design and analyze studies that answer important questions while respecting the constraints of those working on and benefiting from the program being evaluated. The book gives concrete tips on issues such as improving the quality of a study despite tight budget constraints, and demonstrates how the results of randomized impact evaluations can inform policy.

With its self-contained modules, this one-of-a-kind guide is easy to navigate. It also includes invaluable references and a checklist of the common pitfalls to avoid.

- Provides the most up-to-date guide to running randomized evaluations of social programs, especially in developing countries
- Offers practical tips on how to complete high-quality studies in even the most challenging environments
- Self-contained modules allow for easy reference and flexible teaching and learning
- Comprehensive yet nontechnical



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### Editorial Review

#### From the Back Cover

"The popularity of randomized evaluations among researchers and policymakers is growing and holds great promise for a world where decision making will be based increasingly on rigorous evidence and creative thinking. However, conducting a randomized evaluation can be daunting. There are many steps, and decisions made early on can have unforeseen implications for the life of the project. This book, based on more than a decade of personal experience by a foremost practitioner and a wealth of knowledge gathered over the years by researchers at J-PAL, provides both comfort and guidance to anyone seeking to engage in this process."--**Esther Duflo, codirector of J-PAL and coauthor of *Poor Economics***

"Randomized impact evaluations, pioneered by Rachel Glennerster and her colleagues, have emerged as a powerful new tool in the fight against poverty. This book gives us a critical guide for how to actually do them. It is required reading for students, professionals, and researchers committed to using evidence to guide policy."--**Dean Karlan, coauthor of *More Than Good Intentions***

"I have been searching for a book to train my students, research assistants, and field staff to design and implement social policy experiments. My search is over. *Running Randomized Evaluations* provides practical guidance covering all stages of an experiment--wisdom that previously could be acquired only by working directly for an evaluation expert."--**Jeffrey B. Liebman, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University**

"Impact evaluation is a key resource for improving development effectiveness, yet until now it was inaccessible to people--policymakers, NGO staff, and development professionals of all kinds. Oftentimes, we get stuck in the theoretical discourse and philosophical debate and miss the chance to talk about the practical toolkit needed to actually do impact evaluation. *Running Randomized Evaluations* will significantly contribute to accelerate advancements in the field by making the tools of the trade accessible and user-friendly. This is a must-read guide for policymakers, practitioners, and donors alike."--**Jodi Nelson, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

#### About the Author

**Rachel Glennerster** is executive director of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. **Kudzai Takavarasha** holds degrees in chemical engineering and economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and was a policy manager at J-PAL from 2004 to 2012.

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