

Summer School on
METHODS FOR IMPACT EVALUATION
OF HUMAN CAPITAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
Pracatinat – Torino – Italy
17-26 June 2011

Motivation for the course

A shift toward rigorous impact evaluation is taking place across Europe, involving the European Commission as well as several national and regional governments, in order to gain credible evidence on what works and what does not work in implementing their initiatives.

The following are important example of this new development:

- the recently released Fifth EU Cohesion Policy report states that “Evaluation should make much greater use of rigorous methods, in line with international standards, including impact evaluation.” and calls for a “greater recourse to rigorous evaluation methods, including counterfactual impact evaluation”
- DG-Regio has recently commissioned two large scale evaluations of the effectiveness of enterprise support for investment and innovation, calling for the use of counterfactual methods
- A report commissioned by the DG-Employment to examine the impact of the European Social Fund, claims that “relying on impact indicators is no longer acceptable. In the country studies, the picture given by impact indicators overestimates the actual impact by a factor ranging from 2 to 9 [...] This raises the question of the relevance of monitoring impact indicators in the absence of a sound impact analysis.”
- Several European development aid agencies now adopt rigorous impact evaluation methods in order to gain credible evidence on what works in fostering development.
- As an example of the widespread use of impact evaluation, the program offered by the Summer School is very similar to that offered by the Universidad de Los Andes in Colombia
http://economia.uniandes.edu.co/programas/Escuela_de_verano/Cursos/Tecnicas_para_Evaluacion_de_Impacto

One of the factors influencing the speed of adoption of these new methods is the availability of trained evaluators and civil servants with a solid grasp of the limitations, in addition to the potential, of the methods. There is clear shortage of trained evaluators and this summer school is intended to contribute to fill this gap.

Participants

The school is intended for both evaluators interested in learning how to design an impact evaluation and how to tender for one, as well as for the staff of government and non-profit organizations interested in commissioning impact evaluations. Some technical material will be covered during the 8 days of full immersion. However, all is required is familiarity with very basic statistics and mathematical concepts.

For those needing only a general introduction to impact evaluation, the European Commission is organizing a five day introductory course for targeted policy makers, managers and evaluators. The course will cover the advantages of impact evaluations, including when and where they are likely to be applicable and practical issues, including how to write a good terms of reference and how to recognize good evaluations. The course will take place from 16-20 May 2011 in Hungary. The European Commission will pay for travel, accommodation and course fees.

Those interested in one of the 40 places should read the information and follow the application procedure set out at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evaluation_en.htm

Overview of the school on “Methods for impact evaluation”

The school will open on the evening of June 17th, with a general presentation and an open discussion among participants on the several meanings of evaluation. The next two days will be devoted to discuss the fundamental logic of impact evaluation, so that the participants come to share the same language and basic concepts, as well as becoming aware of the fallacies frequently encountered when dealing with impact evaluation. Starting on the third day, there will be 6 days of full immersion in state-of-the-art counterfactual methods. Topics covered will be randomization, regression, propensity score matching, regression discontinuity designs, interrupted time series, instrumental variables, as well as beneficiary surveys. Lectures will be held by recognized experts in the field, who have ample experience with teaching these topics to international audiences.

In addition to formal lecture, an important part of the Summer School learning will be achieved through group work. The cases discussed in the group work sessions will refer to human capital and economic development programs. Each group work session will be followed by a plenary discussion. Participants will be awarded a Diploma during the closing ceremony on the morning of Sunday, June 26th. Departure will follow.

Venue

The course will be held in an elegant resort on the mountain range just outside of Torino, the area that hosted the 2006 Winter Olympics, at 1600 meters of altitude. Transportation will be provided from Torino's airport and railways station and from the terminal of the shuttle from Milano's airports.

Application process

Applicants should come from a EU country or from the Western Balkans, should provide evidence of professional involvement with evaluation activities, possess a good command of English and some basic knowledge of statistics. The maximum number of participants admitted will be 50. Applications must be sent using the form on-line and attaching a CV to the application. Applications must be received by **March 31th, 2011** and admissions will be decided by April 6th. Admitted participants should pay the appropriate fee by April 24th. Payments should be made by bank wire transfer. Instructions will be provided to admitted applicants.

The full fee for the school is €1800 (€1500 plus 20%VAT). The fee is all-inclusive, in that it covers single-room lodging and all meals for nine days, transportation from and to Torino, teaching materials, as well as the course itself. In order to encourage the participation of junior evaluators who are self-financing their participation (or work for public sector organizations facing severe budget cuts), Progetto Valutazione will allow a reduced fee for a maximum of 20 participants. The reduced fee will be €1000 plus 20%VAT. A special section of the application form must be completed requesting the discount. Employees of private organizations are not eligible for the waiver.

Spouses and children can come along, but they will have to pay their own expenses.