

# HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN RIGHTS

## Assessing the Impact of Foreign Aid

### Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, it is *information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible position on an issue, rather than another.

### Reading

Duflo, E., & Kremer, M. (2005). Use of Randomization in the Evaluation of Development Effectiveness. In *Evaluating Development Effectiveness* (Vol. 7, World Bank Series on Evaluation and Development, pp. 205–232). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Duflo, E. (2010, February 10). Social Experiments to Fight Poverty. [Digital video]. TED2010. Retrieved April 30, 2018, from [https://www.ted.com/talks/esther\\_duflo\\_social\\_experiments\\_to\\_fight\\_poverty](https://www.ted.com/talks/esther_duflo_social_experiments_to_fight_poverty).

### Questions

1. What is the “evaluation problem”, and why do Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer believe that randomization offers the best solution to it? Why are they not satisfied with alternatives to randomized evaluations such as (A) propensity score matching, (B) the difference-in-difference technique, and (C) regression discontinuity design?
2. What lessons do Duflo and Kremer draw from their use of randomized evaluations in assessing the impact of different educational programs in developing countries?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.