

Women in Leadership in Economics Initiative (IEA-WE): Research Papers

IEA World Congress, Medellín

December 12, 2023

Interventions to Advance Women in Economics

- ▶ In our profession, women may encounter obstacles at every stage of decision-making:
 - ▶ choosing economics as an undergraduate major,
 - ▶ pursuing an economics PhD,
 - ▶ securing a job and advancing within academia.
- ▶ The scarcity of women in leadership positions is a result of several leaks in the pipeline, a result of various barriers we seek to uncover.
- ▶ **What strategies effectively reduce the obstacles faced by female economists, thus narrowing the gender gap in our profession?**
- ▶ We are commissioning research papers to identify what works.

Call for Papers

In 2023 we launched a call for research proposals on “what works” to reduce the gender gap in developing economies.

- ▶ Priority was given to research proposals from Argentina, Colombia, Ghana, India, Mexico, Senegal, and South Africa, but submissions from other developing nations were also welcomed.
- ▶ Budget set at USD 15,000 to 25,000 spanning two years.

We have plans for a second round of calls.

Commissioned Research Papers

- ▶ We received 63 proposals from 17 countries.
- ▶ We commissioned 8 papers
- ▶ Interventions in 6 countries
 1. India (2)
 2. Ghana (1)
 3. Senegal (1)
 4. South Africa (2)
 5. Colombia (1)
 6. China (1)
- ▶ **Topics**
 - ▶ Curriculum changes
 - ▶ Female role models
 - ▶ Mentorship programs
 - ▶ Expansion of professional networks
 - ▶ Information about what Economists do
 - ▶ Funding national programs

Colombia: Innovative Introductory to Economics Course

Two RCT

- ▶ **Undergraduate entry students** (in 2 universities)
 - ▶ 8 weeks introductory economics course taught by LAC female economists, highlighting women's contributions to the profession.
 - ▶ Outcomes: preferences for Economics courses and **enrollment in a postgraduate** Economics degree.

- ▶ **High school students**: present diverse topics of study, featuring female role models as examples of what economists do.
 - ▶ Outcomes: female **enrollment in undergraduate** Economics.
 - ▶ Targeted to low-income high school students.

- ▶ **They will develop teaching materials** (videos, activities, etc.).

- ▶ Researchers from Universidad del Rosario.

South Africa (I): Curriculum Change (CORE Econ)

- ▶ Analysis of implementation of CORE curriculum.
- ▶ **It may appeal more to female students**, for topics and structure.
 - ▶ CORE focus on the most important problems faced by our societies including climate change, injustice, innovation, and the future of work.
- ▶ Outcomes:
 - ▶ choice of Economics Major by female students,
 - ▶ female academic performance in introductory Economics.
- ▶ University of Cape Town.

India (I): Female Role Model and Mentorship

- ▶ RCT in 60 universities.
- ▶ Six, 1.5 hours each, online **mentorship** sessions by female role models for female students in their final year of undergraduate.
- ▶ Outcomes
 1. enrollment in post-graduate programs in Economics, career aspirations of students and whether the student is appearing for Economics entrance exam.
 2. non-cognitive skills (grit, etc).
- ▶ Researchers from the Indian Statistical Institute and Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research.

South Africa (II): Information and Role Models

- ▶ RCT
- ▶ Third-year BA students of two large universities in SA
- ▶ Information about potential careers in Economics and role models
 - ▶ Videos showcasing successful female economists and what they do
- ▶ Outcome: Female enrollment in postgraduate programs.
- ▶ Researchers at University of Pretoria and North-West University

Ghana: Information and Mentorship for Undergraduates

- ▶ RCT
- ▶ Undergraduate female students, two treatments:
 - ▶ **information** (career prospects in economics and bio sketches of successful women economists);
 - ▶ **mentorship** with successful female economists (in person + WhatsApp group)
- ▶ Outcomes:
 1. grades in introductory economics courses
 2. decisions to major in economics
 3. aspiration to continue with economics at higher levels.
- ▶ Department of Economics of the University of Ghana.

India (II): Women in Econ and Policy India Association

- ▶ Test a **battery of interventions** to encourage women students to pursue careers in economics upon completion of their degrees.
- ▶ 3-year program for undergraduate students, and 2-year program for postgraduate students.
- ▶ Interventions
 - ▶ workshops (2000 students): '**role-model**' and bridge **information** and skills gaps
 - ▶ long-term **mentorship**
 - ▶ facilitate access to a professional **network**.
- ▶ Priority to low SES women.
- ▶ Run by WiEP

China: Funding and Role Models (two studies)

- ▶ Impact evaluation of **relaxing women's age limit** for getting **funds** of the National Science Foundation.
 - ▶ In 2011, the age limit for women applying to the Youth Science Fund was extended from 35 to 40 years old.
 - ▶ Women may have an extended project completion time of 24 months due to childbirth.
- ▶ Expose female students to **female role models** to raise the share of them pursuing a PhD in Economics.
 - ▶ Two treatments (RCT)
 - ▶ **Stories and books** about successful female economists.
 - ▶ **Lectures** by successful women Economists, discussing their experiences and career academic path.

Senegal: National Funding for Female Researchers

- ▶ **PAPES project:** National program designed to support the careers of female researchers:
 - ▶ grants, travel expenses, equipment, publication fees, etc.
- ▶ Outcomes: completing Econ PhD, retention of female Econ researchers, number of publications of female economists.
- ▶ **Big effort in collecting data:** own surveys (quant and quali) + admin data.
- ▶ Evaluation based on comparing beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of PAPES (propensity score matching).
- ▶ Université Amadou Mahtar Mbow, Dakar; Assane SECK University, Ziguinchor; Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar

Gender Gap in Labor Market: We Should Lead by Example

- ▶ Economists are experts in
 - ▶ analyzing gender gaps in the labor market,
 - ▶ conducting impact evaluations,
 - ▶ giving policy recommendations.
- ▶ **We must start from home and leading by example!**
 - ▶ We hope that these studies can influence professional practices by presenting concrete examples of interventions that work to reduce the gender gap in our field.
- ▶ **Stay tuned for the upcoming call for research proposals.**