Evidence of the effectiveness of evidence?

Description

Tweet

Heart + Mind? Or Just Heart? Experiments in Aid Effectiveness (And a Contest!) by Dean Karlan 05/27/2011 | 4:00 pm Found courtesy of @poverty_action

RD comment: There is a killer assumption behind many of the efforts being made to measure aid effectiveness â?? that evidence of the effectiveness of specific aid interventions will make a difference. That is, it will be used to develop better policies and practices. But, as far as I know, much less effort is being invested into testing this assumption, to find out when and where evidence works this way, or not. This is worrying, because anyone looking into how policies are actually made knows that it is often not a pretty picture.

That is why, contrary to my normal policy, I am publicising a blog posting. This posting is by Dean Karlan on an actual experiment that looks at the effect of providing evidence of an aid intervention (a specific form of micro-finance assistance) on the willingness of individual donors to make donations to the aid agency that is delivering the intervention. This relatively simple experiment is now underway.

Equally interesting is the fact that the author has launched, albeit on a very modest scale, a prediction market on the likely results of this experiment. Visitors to the blog are asked to make their predictions on the results of the experiment. When the results of the experiment are available Dean will identify and reward the most successful â??bidderâ?• (with two free copies of his new book *More Than Good Intentions*). Apart from the fun element involved, the use of a prediction maket will enable Dean to identify to what extent his experiment has generated new knowledge [i.e. experiment results differ a lot from the average prediction], versus confirmed existing common knowledge [i.e. results = the average prediction]. That sort of thing does not happen very often.

So, I encourage you to visit Deanâ??s blog and participate. You do this by making your predictions using the Comment facility at the end of the blog (where you can also read otherâ??s predictions already made, plus their comments).

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. aid effectiveness
2. evidence
3. experiments
4. prediction market

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