



Center for Effective Global Action

Measuring CEGA's impact

Client: Temina Madon

About CEGA

The Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) designs and tests solutions for the problems of poverty, generating actionable evidence for policy-makers in less developed countries. We are a West Coast network of researchers using rigorous field trials, behavioral experiments, and tools from data science to measure and maximize the impacts of economic development programs throughout the world.

Project Description

CEGA would like to trace the influence of our research on decision-making by government agencies and multi-laterals (like the World Bank or the UN). To demonstrate this influence, we cannot simply track citations of articles published in the academic literature. Instead, we must search the grey literature (i.e. agency reports), government websites, media outlets, and other informal channels for traces of our work. We would like to identify an automated way to capture these “paths of influence” – e.g. through systematic web search/content scraping, query of online report repositories, and/or analysis of Twitter feeds and other social media streams. Additional work on visualizing these “paths of influence” would be valuable, since it will help us clearly articulate the returns to investment in our research.

As an institution, CEGA’s mission is to promote widespread adoption of high quality evidence – and in particular, the research generated by academics in our network. “Adoption” could come in the form of a new evidence-based government policy, the implementation of a proven program by government agencies or NGOs, or the use of a rigorously tested business strategy by a company or startup. Our objective is to show how and where the adoption of evidence occurs. But we would like to do this in a systematic way, rather than through anecdotes and cherry-picked results. This will give us greater credibility with donors, decision-makers, and other stakeholders. It will also help us identify those studies, researchers, and initiatives that are most relevant to (or influential within) the policy-maker community (which, in turn, can inform our allocation of resources). There are several similar think tanks and policy research institutes that would benefit from any methods or tools developed by a student team focusing on this problem.