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To the Development Innovation Lab

Research That Matters: Why I'm Drawn to DIL

I have spent the last 8 years managing rigorous development economics research across East Africa. I've designed RCTs, implemented quasi-experimental evaluations, coordinated research across three countries, and watched evidence transform into policy adoption. Through all of this, I've learned one thing: rigorous research only matters if the systems behind it are thoughtfully designed and meticulously executed.

This is precisely why I'm excited about the Research Manager role at DIL. Michael Kremer's vision of using rigorous economics to unlock development solutions is exactly the work I want to dedicate myself to. And what makes DIL unique—what I believe makes research truly transformational—is the commitment to building systems and processes that allow researchers to focus on what they do best: asking important questions and finding answers that matter.

Research Implementation: From Protocol to Insight

I have directed the implementation of multiple rigorous evaluations in development economics. This means more than managing timelines—it means thinking deeply about research design, ensuring methodological rigor, and executing flawlessly in resource-constrained field environments.

I implemented a randomized controlled trial evaluating youth skills training programs across three countries (Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda), involving 8,000+ participants. I didn't just oversee data collection—I designed the randomization protocol, trained 30+ field staff, established quality assurance standards achieving <2% error rates, and ensured research protocols were rigorously followed. The result: findings so rigorous they informed national curriculum adoption.

I also directed quasi-experimental evaluations using propensity score matching and difference-in-differences methods. I understand the nuances of causal inference, the challenges of field implementation, and how to maintain methodological integrity under pressure.

At DIL, I would bring this same rigor and commitment to ensuring that research implementation is not just competent, but exemplary. I understand that how research is conducted is as important as the questions being asked.

Building Research Systems That Scale

One of my proudest achievements is building research management systems that make teams more effective. I didn't start with fancy systems—I started with a problem: researchers were spending too much time on administration. So I systematically identified bottlenecks, designed processes, and automated workflows.

I built multi-country research coordination systems connecting teams across Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania. I created project budgeting tools that give researchers real-time visibility into spending. I designed training programs that scaled research quality standards. I documented procedures so that new team members could ramp up quickly without losing rigor.

The result: research teams that could focus on research, administrators who could scale operations, and a culture where quality and efficiency weren't in tension—they reinforced each other.

I understand that DIL is in a growth phase. Building research systems that can scale is exactly what's needed. I'm excited about the opportunity to do for DIL what I've done for other organizations: create infrastructure that enables brilliant research.

Leading Research Teams & Building Partnerships

Managing research teams is fundamentally about understanding that research is a human endeavor. I have recruited, trained, and mentored 50+ research professionals across multiple countries. I do this not by imposing standards from above, but by helping teams understand why standards matter—why a 2% error rate in data collection isn't just a number, it's the foundation of trustworthy evidence.

I have also managed high-stakes partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and donors. I present research findings at stakeholder meetings. I translate technical results into policy briefs. I work with government partners to think about implementation. I understand that the best research is research that policymakers will actually use.

At DIL, I would bring this same partnership mindset. I would work closely with lead researchers to understand their needs. I would mentor junior staff. I would ensure that DIL's research doesn't just contribute to academia—it contributes to better development outcomes.

Why DIL, and Why Now

I have been fortunate to work on important problems in development. But I believe the most important work is the kind DIL does: asking fundamental questions about how to improve lives at

scale, and using rigorous economics to find answers.

Michael Kremer's vision has always been clear: economics is a tool for development. Not an abstract exercise in theory, but a practical instrument for understanding what works and why. DIL exemplifies this. It is ambitious, rigorous, and grounded in a belief that evidence can transform outcomes.

At this point in my career, I want to dedicate myself to research organizations where rigorous science matters and where research is in service of development. DIL is exactly that organization. I want to help build the systems, lead the teams, and manage the operations that allow DIL researchers to do their best work.

I am ready to bring my 8+ years of research management experience, my deep knowledge of development contexts in East Africa, my commitment to research rigor, and my passion for evidence-based solutions to the Research Manager role at DIL.

Thank you for considering my application. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss how I can support DIL's mission and contribute to the research that will define development economics for the next generation.

Sincerely,

Nichodemus Werre Amollo