Hongdi Zhao

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EDUCATION

Cornell University, Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management　　　　Expected: May 2026
Ph.D., Applied Economics and Management
Research Interests: International and Development Economics, Machine Learning

Cornell University, Cornell Institute for Public Affairs (CIPA), Ithaca, NY　　　　May 2018
Master of Public Administration, Concentration: International Development
Master Thesis: Study of Village Savings and Loans Associations and Their Ability to Address the Credit Needs of Smallholder Farmers in Southern Tanzania

East China Normal University (ECNU), School of Finance and Statistics, Shanghai, China　　　　June 2016
Bachelor of Science in Statistics
Bachelor Thesis: Economic and Environmental Spatial Regression Analysis

PUBLICATIONS

Kosec, K., Song, J., Zhao, H., & Holtemeyer, B. (2022). The Gendered Impacts of Income Fluctuations on Household Departure, Labor Supply, and Human Capital Decisions: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan. *Feminist Economics*, 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2022.2101680

FAO. (2022). Introducing the Agrifood Systems Technologies and Innovations Outlook (ATIO). *FAO.* https://doi.org/10.4060/cc2506en

Kosec, K., Akramov, K., Mirkasimov, B., Song, J., & Zhao, H. (2022). Aspirations and women's empowerment: Evidence from Kyrgyzstan. *Economics of Transition and Institutional Change*, 30(1), 101–134. https://doi.org/10.1111/ecot.12302

Ragasa, C., Lambrecht, I., Mahrt, K., Zhao, H., Aung, Z. W., & Scott, J. (2021). Can nutrition education mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on dietary quality? Cluster-randomised controlled trial evidence in Myanmar's Central Dry Zone. *Maternal & Child Nutrition*, 17(4), e13259. https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13259

WORKING PAPER

"Dynamic Optimal Sampling for Child Malnutrition Prevention in Northern Kenya using Machine Learning Model" (with Chris Barrett, Sumanta Basu)

"Bring Power to the People or the Well-Connected? Evidence from Ethiopia on the Gendered Effects of Decentralizing Service Delivery" (with Katrina Kosec, Song Jie)

MAJOR RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC　　　　Sep 2020 – Jul 2021
PIs: Katrina Kosec, Catherine Ragasa
Research Analyst, Development Strategy and Governance Division
- Co-author on paper to study government decentralization and its impact on gender equality in Ethiopia.
- Analyzed Kyrgyzstan panel dataset from 2004-2016 to study the effects of income shocks on rural health and nutrition. Constructed instrumental income variables and computed Rotemberg weights following Goldsmith-Pinkham et al. (2020).

Yale University, Department of Economics, New Haven, CT　　　　Jul 2019 – Aug 2020
PIs: Rohini Pande (Yale University), Erica Field (Duke University), Giorgia Barboni (University of Warwick)
Pre-doctoral Research Fellow, Yale Economic Growth Center

- Designed survey questionnaires to collect social protection, particularly on food security information related to Public Distribution System (PDS) shops in Chhattisgarh in collaboration with the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection. Built Tableau dashboard to present district wised food distribution status and wrote report to the government with findings and suggestions.
- In charge of 80,000 migrant database, designed and conducted migrant surveys to understand their skills and needs in order to build programs to support migrants during the COVID lockdown in India.
- Used Google Maps Platform to access location APIs and wrote Python script to request geocode information that used for study randomization. Randomized study villages and programmed survey questionnaires to SurveyCTO platform.

Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, MA   Jul 2018 – Jul 2019
Research Fellow, Evidence for Policy Design
PIs: Rohini Pande (Yale University), Erica Field (Duke University), Giorgia Barboni (University of Warwick)
- In charge of NIH data archiving: cleaning, harmonizing, and archiving survey data containing 8000+ households' information to Harvard and Yale data repository.
- Conducted data analysis on household, health, and social network data on over 50,000 respondents.
- Used machine learning algorithm to match social network survey data with administrative data.

Cornell Student Multidisciplinary Applied Research Teams (SMART) Project, New Orleans, LA   Jan – May 2017
Research Team Member, Foundation for the Mid-South
PI: Ralph Christy (Cornell University)
- Analyzed data from U.S Census Survey of Business Owners; conducted field research, benchmark analysis of universities, communities, and federal organizations; developed a regional enterprise strategy for Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.
- Paper: A Regional Enterprise Development Strategy for The Foundation for The Mid-South.

CARE—Cornell Collaboration Research, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania   Jun – Dec 2017
Research Fellow, Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future
PIs: Arnab Basu (Cornell University), Margaret Johnson (Cornell University)
- Lead an independent study about **financial inclusion** in Southern Tanzania to evaluate the project's ability to address the credit needs of Tanzanian small holder farmers; designed study survey.
- Conducted 240 individual interviews and facilitated 8 focus group discussions.
- Paper: Villages Savings and Loan Associations and their Ability to Address the Credit Needs of Smallholder Farmers.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- [Graduate Resident Fellow](), Flora Rose House, Cornell University   2022
- Data Science Fellow, The Data Incubator   2020
- Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society Member   2018
- Teaching Assistantship, Cornell Policy Analysis Department ($34,000)   2018
- Cornell Institute for Public Policy Fellowship Award, Cornell University ($7,500)   2016–2018
- Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future Research Fellowship, Cornell University ($7,000)   2017
- Merit-based Scholarship for Statistics Student, East China Normal University   2014
- National Mathematical Modeling Contest, 3rd Place, East China Normal University   2013

PROFESSIONAL WORKING EXPERIENCE

Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, Ithaca, NY   Oct 2016 – Dec 2017
Graduate Student Assistant, Cornell University
- Managed website, weekly e-newsletter, Facebook, and Cornell Event Calendar of Institute for African Development and the Latin American Studies Program
- Assisted with set-up and break-down of lecture series and conferences, and communication with speakers
- Designed and created posters for center events and conferences using InDesign.

United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi, Kenya   May – Jul 2015
Project Analyst, Division of Policy Implementation

- Demonstrated great communication and project management skills through organizing the UNEP Regional Conference in Malaysia. Lead a section related to advanced technologies used to protect wild life during the conference.
- Conducted literature reviews for wildlife conservation policies and wrote policy briefs.
- Oversaw editing, layout, and production of the Chinese-language version of the *Stolen Apes* report using InDesign.

Ecobank Group, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania   Aug 2014 – Feb 2015
Client Management Consultant, Corporate Banking Department
- The only Chinese employee working in the bank to in charge of 27 Chinese corporate clients, committed to clients, helped the bank to identify clients' needs, always response to client request in a timely and accurate manner.
- Maintained the existing clients well and expanded the bank business with 7 new corporate clients.
- Reviewed and evaluated corporate business loan applicants.
- Lead the organization of several activities on behalf of Ecobank Tanzania:
  - "Chinese Night": the first activity for Chinese in Tanzania gathering together with more than 600 Chinese participants. This event is co-organized with Chinese Business Council and Group Six Construction Company Limited, and the event received very good feedback from Chinese companies in Tanzania.
  - Main host of the 3rd Tanzania Law Training Seminar with the purpose of facilitating business legally and providing corresponding financial services.

Women Empowerment, Manipal, India   Jan – Feb 2013
Project Intern, Manipal University
- Conducted field research on projects for women empowerment in 20 small villages in Kaikamba countryside.
- Organized projects to teach women skills to become self-supporting in tobacco production and farming.
- Six self-help groups with more than 120 women in total were able to take loan from banks and start their tobacco and dairy product business.

TEACHING ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE

Emerging Markets (Undergraduate & Grade, AEM 4420/5420). Prof. Ralph Christy
Introduction to Statistics (Undergraduate: PAM 2100). Prof. Thomas Evans
Evaluation (Graduate: PADM 5340). Prof. Margaret Johnson
Intermediate Microeconomics (Graduate, NCCY 5020). Prof. Thomas Evans
Seminar on African Development (Graduate, CRP 4770). Prof. Muna Ndulo

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Vice President, CIPA Women in Public Policy, Ithaca NY   Jan 2017 – Jan 2018
Vice President, International Association of Students in Economics and Commerce, China   Aug 2013 – Jul 2014
International Volunteer, Tofauti On The Move NGO, Nairobi, Kenya   Jul – Aug 2013
Organizing Committee President, Green Planet Forum Shanghai, China   Feb – Jun 2013

International Seminar:
- **"Global Citizenship Development Seminar"** (Chief Delegate): the seminar had more than 110 international delegates from 28 countries and it was held in Shanghai, China.
- **"Asia Pacific Congress in The Philippines"** (Chief Delegate from Mainland of China): during this conference, more than 300 delegates from 29 countries discussed Youth Leadership Development Plan for Asia Pacific and the conference was held in Manila, Philippines.

SKILLS

- **Software & Programming**: Stata (Advanced), Python (Advanced), Latex (Advanced), Excel (Advanced), ArcGIS (Proficient), InDesign (Intermediate), R (Intermediate), SQL (Intermediate), Spark (Intermediate)
- **Languages**: Mandarin (Native Speaker), English (TOEFL: 103, IELTS: 7.5)