Impact Evaluation 101

1.1 Introduction to Impact Evaluation

- **Attribution**: Determining that changes in outcomes are a result of the program/intervention

- **Causal effect**: The change in outcomes directly caused by an intervention

- **Cost analysis**: Determines program costs, often compared to outcomes achieved

- **Counterfactual**: What would have happened to participants if they had not received the intervention

- **External validity**: The extent to which results can be generalized to other contexts

- **Formative evaluation**: Determines how well a prospective program may work for participants

- **Heterogeneous effects**: Differences in outcomes among different types of participants

- **Impact evaluation**: A specific type of evaluation that measures the causal effect of an intervention on outcomes

- **Internal validity**: The extent to which results show the true impact of the project and not other factors

- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**: Broader framework encompassing routine tracking and various evaluation types

- **Performance evaluation**: Observes changes in outputs/outcomes within the participant population

- **Process evaluation**: Determines if a program is being implemented as planned

1.2 Fundamentals of Impact Evaluations and Counterfactuals

- **Comparison group**: A group that may have received a different type of intervention or "business as usual" or standard treatment

- **Experimental designs**: A method that randomly assigns units to "treatment" and "comparison/counterfactual" groups and then compares outcomes across these groups

- **Quasi-experimental designs**:Use other statistical methods apart from randomization to approximate a counterfactual comparison group

- **Selection bias**: Occurs when the sample is no longer representative of the overall population. It can be introduced into studies based on program eligibility criteria or if participants are able to self-select into the program

- **Treatment group**: The group that receives the program/service/intervention