

To RCT or not to RCT?

**How do we answer the big questions of
our times?**

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WHAT ARE THE BIG QUESTIONS OF OUR TIMES?

- What **reduces poverty**? (Hint: its not money!)
- What helps to **abate emissions** ?(Hint: its not money!)
- What changes **climate action**?(Hint: its not money!)
- What helps to **grow more forests** ? (Hint: its not money!)
- What gets people to be more **socially cohesive**? (Hint: its not money!)
- What makes us **more resilient** (Hint: its not money – it *could be* social networks).



FOUR THINGS WE HAVE LEARNT FROM RCTs.



1. Its NOT (just) about the money.



1. MONEY WORKS SOMETIMES. BUT JUST SOMETIMES.

1. Tax collection in Pakistan



2. Female condom distribution in Zambia



KEY LESSON 1:

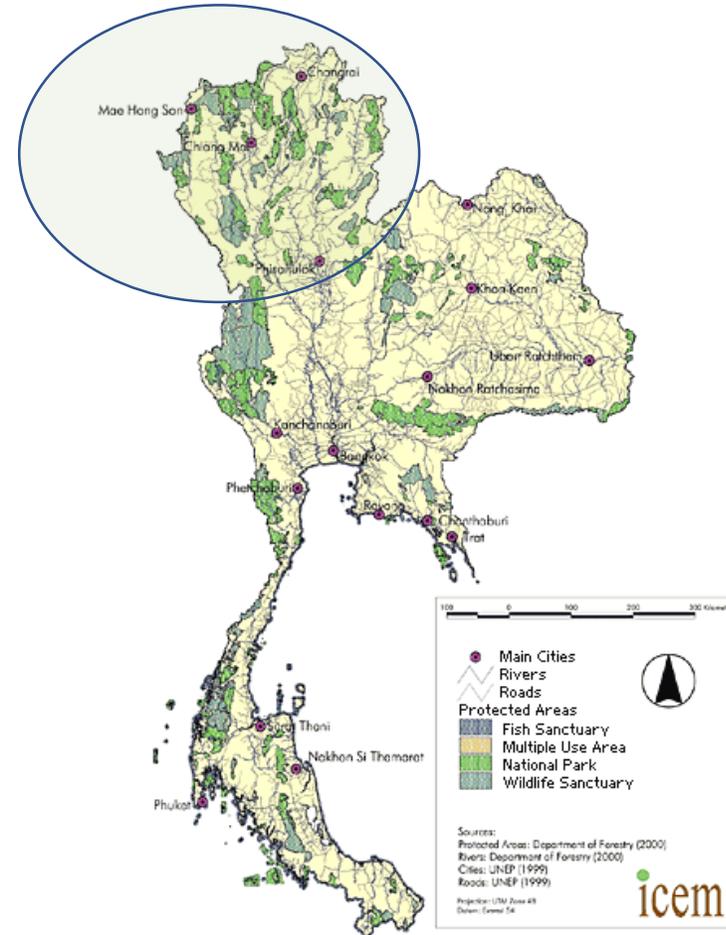
- EFFECTIVE DELIVERY REQUIRES BETTER THINKING AROUND HOW WE STRUCTURE INCENTIVES.
- *SOCIAL RECOGNITION AND RECOGNITION BY PEERS* IS IMPORTANT.

2. Some things aren't as simple as they seem.



DOES PROTECTING FORESTS REDUCE DEFORESTATION?

Easy question?



KEY LESSON 2:

THINK OF *BIAS IN PLACEMENT* AND TARGETING
– IT WILL DETERMINE WHAT IS VALID TO SAY
AND WHAT ISN'T.

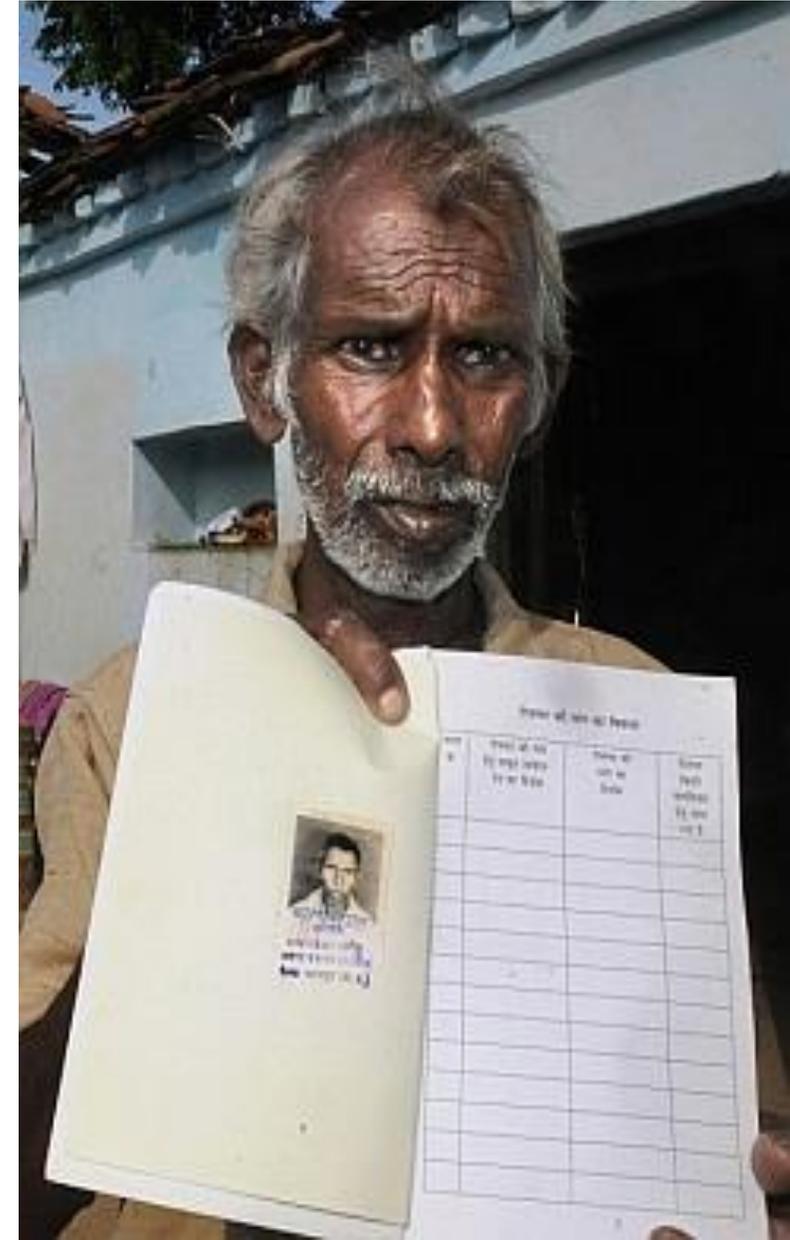
3. Its almost NEVER
about the money.



Effectiveness of public programmes in India

- India's NREGA programme:
- Largest employment guarantee scheme.
- Very low uptake.

"ROLE OF E-GOVERNANCE IN BHARAT NIRMAN"



KEY LESSON 3:

THINK ABOUT INTRA-INSTITUTIONAL
DYNAMICS
(INCENTIVES, INCENTIVES, INCENTIVES).

4. Its the NORMS
stupid! (change them)



COUNTRIES WITH NORMS OF DISPUTE AND 'LEGAL DECISION SHOPPING' – LIBERIA!

- A two- year program of training, using **elders and youth** (change makers!) changed the norm of expensive land disputes.



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

KEY LESSON 4:

IT'S THE NORMS STUPID.

CHANGE THEM.

(THINK *KEY CHANGE MAKERS!*)

WHAT CAN RCTs DO GOING FORWARD?

NOT so much in measuring attributable impact but...

1. Exploratory work: *Can something work? (e.g. what changes insurance uptake).*
2. *How can we deliver better?* The role of behavioral science. (e.g. in tax payment nudges).
3. Impact investing – the counterfactual is “impact washing”.

Because experimentation is so easy to understand, its easier to influence policy.

