Development Research in Practice Course

July 12 to September 3, 2021

Overview

In July-September 2021, DIME organized the *Development Research in Practice Course* to accompany the release of *The DIME Analytics Data Handbook*. The virtual course aimed to teach users of development data how to handle data effectively, efficiently, and ethically. The course covered the data workflow at each stage of an empirical research project, from design to analysis to publication. The course was split up into 7 weeks with the following themes:

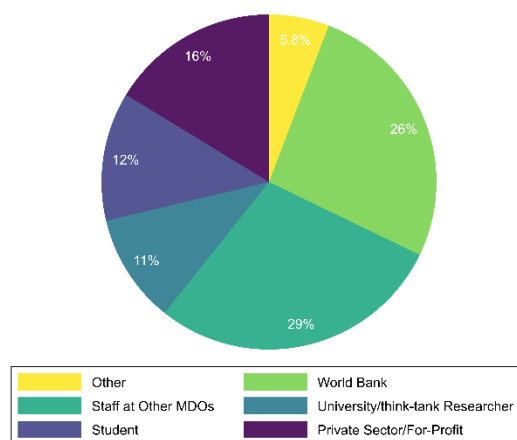|	
Week 1	Conducting reproducible, transparent, and credible research
Week 2	Setting the stage for effective and efficient collaboration
Week 3	Establishing a measurement framework
Week 4	Acquiring development data
Week 5	Cleaning and processing research data
Week 6	Constructing and analyzing research data
Week 7	Publishing reproducible research outputs

Each week consisted of a combination of live sessions, pre-recorded lectures, self-paced readings, applied exercises, and pre-programmed quizzes. The course materials and recordings are all available publicly through the Open Science Framework portal. Participants demonstrated a marked improvement of 63% on the pre- / post-knowledge tests.

Participation and Outreach

The course witnessed extremely high participation, with a total of 2813 registered participants. Roughly 26% of the participants were employed at the World Bank. A further 29% were affiliated with other multilateral development organizations like UNICEF, UNHCR, USAID, FCDO and WFP. Nearly 25% of the participants were affiliated with universities like Harvard, Yale, MIT, Stanford, African School of Econo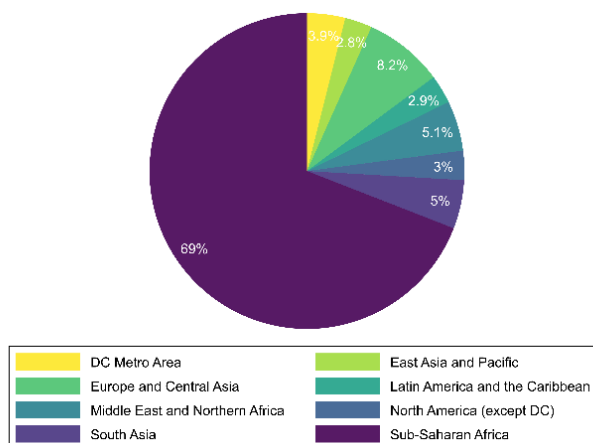mics and LSE, either as students or as researchers. Finally, around 16% were affiliated with private sector organizations, demonstrating the diversity in professional backgrounds of participants.

Figure 1 - Affiliation of course participants

Legend:
- Other
- Staff at Other MDOs
- Student
- World Bank
- University/think-tank Researcher
- Private Sector/For-Profit

Further, Figure 2 highlights the widespread global outreach of the course, with nearly 70% of the participants originating from Sub-Saharan Africa, including countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Nigeria. Another 10% of the participants attended from the Middle East and Northern Africa, and South Asia regions. The remaining 20% were engaged in the Europe and Central Asia, East Asia Pacific, and the North America region.

Figure 2 - Work region of course participants

Legend:
- DC Metro Area
- Europe and Central Asia
- Middle East and Northern Africa
- South Asia
- East Asia and Pacific
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- North America (except DC)
- Sub-Saharan Africa

WORLD BANK GROUP
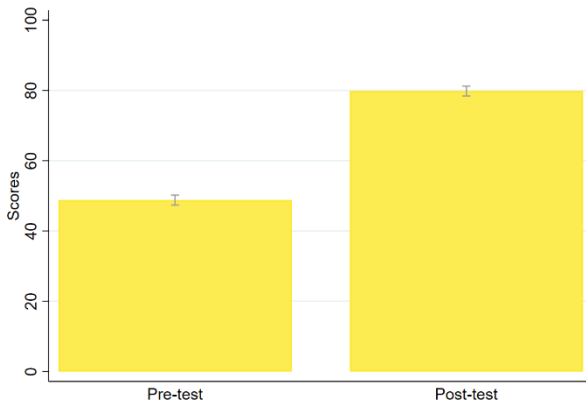
UKaid
from the British people

DIME analytics

Communication and Logistics

A Slack workspace was set up for communication, as the course was entirely virtual. The Slack workspace allowed participants to network, discuss course materials, and easily engage with the organizing team. The Slack workspace was highly active, with nearly 1100 members, and over 6300 messages sent throughout the course.

Knowledge Scores

Throughout the course, participants engaged with hands-on exercises and quizzes. There were 7 pre-programmed quizzes covering each of the chapters in detail. In order to receive a certificate, participants were required to score 80% or more in at least 6 out of 7 quizzes. Of the 500 participants who completed all quizzes, 483 successfully met this criteria, resulting in a pass rate of 96%.
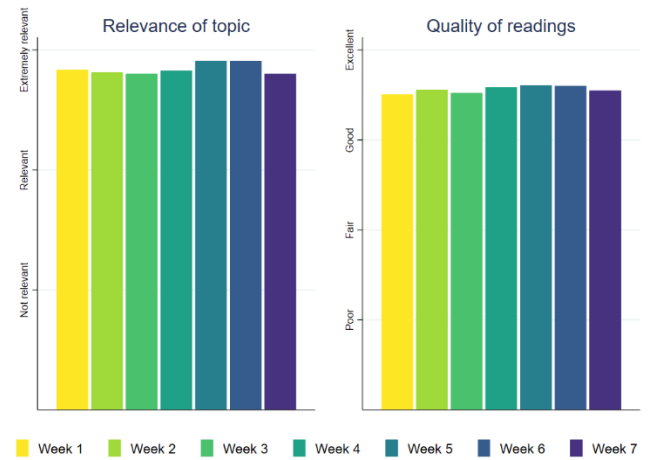

Figure 3 - Pre- and Post-test scores

Participants were also required to complete a knowledge test covering all topics included in the course before and after the course. Comparing scores in the two tests shows a statistically significant gain of 31 points out of 100, or nearly 64%, in mean scores at the end of the course over the baseline score.

Participant Feedback

Figure 4 - Participants feedback on topic and quality by week

Participants rated the course as a great starting point for foraying into the field of development research. The main point for improvement identified by participants was to incorporate more practical resources for data analysis. They also acknowledged the attention to detail, and the efforts of DIME in promoting ethical and credible research globally.

> I want to thank you and all the DIME Group for organizing the DRiP course. I will recommend other development economists to take the course in future editions. I am currently in the first year of my PhD, so it will be really helpful to apply all the recommendations in my research project.

- DRiP Course participant feedback