

Irene Furlani

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Development economist with 4 years experience in applied microeconomic research and impact evaluation using experimental and quasi-experimental methods, including fieldwork in Sub Saharan Africa and Asia. Collaborated with international organizations, governments, implementing partners, and academic institutions. Conducting policy-relevant research with a special focus on development and digitalization.

Professional Experience

Doctoral Researcher, RTG Digital Platform Ecosystems

April 2024 – Present

University of Passau, Chair of Development Economics (Prof. Dr. Michael Grimm)

Passau, Germany

- **Causal inference & impact evaluation:** Co-designed and led a cluster randomized trial evaluating a digital training offered to beneficiaries of the governmental *Millennial Farmers Program* in Indonesia.
- **Programming & quasi-experimental method:** Integrated survey, administrative, geospatial, and satellite data in a reproducible workflow on GitHub using STATA, Python, and R. Applied quasi-experimental methods to estimate the effect of mobile internet connectivity on women's empowerment in India, examining the use of the internet to access family planning information as a potential mechanism.
- **Experimental survey method:** Co-created, implemented, and assessed the impact of a privacy-enhancing plug-in using a randomized survey experiment in Northern Ghana, girls should participate in social activities, providing evidence of systematic under-reporting of menstruation stigma that limits girls' social inclusion.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Collaborate with implementing partners, academics, local researchers, and government representatives during project design (inception workshop), and dissemination.

(Junior) Research Manager

April 2023 – July 2024

Center for Evaluation and Development (C4ED)

Mannheim, Germany

- **Stakeholder engagement & project management:** Organized and led meetings with several stakeholders. Produced training material and documentation, trained about 100 enumerators and supervisors, supported with the ethical clearance procedure, completed baseline data collection, and integrated data checks directly in the WBG workflow.
- **Randomization and stakeholder engagement:** Contributed to several meetings for a project to incentivize the adoption of solar panel by MSMEs in Pakistan, as part of the financial instrument offer of a local National Bank. Responsible for data quality and the randomization process, assigning beneficiaries to a standard loan, a subsidized loan, or a loan with a weather insurance.
- **Impact evaluation:** Co-designed impact evaluation using propensity score matching, to overcome a failed RCT, survey design, trained of the field team in Ethiopia, data quality management, quantitative analysis, and report writing.
- **Dissemination outreach:** Prepared systematic literature reviews and contributed to technical reports and research proposals.

Quantitative Research Student Assistant

August 2022 – March 2023

Chair of Econometrics at the University of Mannheim and C4ED

Mannheim, Germany

- **Impact evaluation support:** Programmed and co-designed surveys and preparing analytical reports.
- **Dissemination and outreach support:** Conducted literature reviews, combine STATA and Python for analysis and visualization of the results, contributed to report writing, and developed presentations for meetings for single and multi-country projects in developing countries.

Education

University of Passau

April 2024 – Present

PhD in Economics - Supervisors: Prof. Michael Grimm and Prof. Dr. Stefan Bauernschuster

Passau, Germany

- **Dissertation title:** *Can digital technologies empower the Global South? Three essays evaluating collection, processing, and diffusion of information*
- **Project:** *Digitizing extension services: Evidence from a two-sided randomized experiment in Indonesia*
Presented at: Advances with Field Experiments (Chicago, USA) | European Development Economic Group Conference 2026 (Kiel, Germany) | SITES-AICC conference 2026 (Frascati, Italy) - Best paper to young economist: Cornia Student Award | 13th MEIDE conference (Kerala, India)
- **Project:** *Does Privacy Matter? A Randomized Survey Experiment on Reported Menstrual Stigma in Northern Ghana*
Presented at: UNU MERIT Internal Conference (Maastricht, Netherlands) | 2026 Africa Evidence Summit (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
Awarded one-year free subscription to SurveyCTO (approx. value 7,500 USD)
- **Project:** *Connect to Protect: Mobile Connectivity, Family Planning, and Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment in India*
Presented at: 3rd Passau ECON Workshop (Waldkirchen, Germany)
- **Visiting PhD Student** at the United Nations University (UNU-MERIT), Maastricht, Netherlands (September–December 2026)
- **Expected submission:** March 2027 (defense in May 2027)

University of Mannheim

September 2020 – March 2023

M.Sc. in Economics

Mannheim, Germany

University of Rome Tor Vergata

September 2017 – July 2020

B.Sc. Business Administration & Economics (Economics curriculum)

Rome, Italy

Teaching

Growth Inequality and Poverty

October 2025 - February 2026

Exercise class for graduate students

University of Passau, Germany

Growth and Development

April - September 2025

Exercise class for undergraduate students

University of Passau, Germany

Replicating Empirical Research in Public and Development

Economics: Topics on Digitalization and Platforms

April - September 2025

Seminar for graduate students

University of Passau, Germany

SurveyCTO and Stata for Data in Social Sciences

February 2025

Guest Lecture

University Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Skills

Statistical software: Stata (advanced) | R, Python (intermediate)

Other software: SurveyCTO, LaTeX, Microsoft Office (advanced) | GitHub, ODK (intermediate)

Languages

Italian (native) | English (advanced) | German (intermediate) | Spanish, Bahasa, Kiswahili (basic)