

# Katya Vasilaky

## Education

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**Ph.D. Applied Economics, 2011** *University of Maryland,* College Park, MD

**B.A. Economics & Mathematics, 2003** *Columbia University,* New York, NY

## Dissertation

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“Development, Technology Adoption and Social Networks,” August 2011, Chair: Kenneth Leonard.

## Fields of Expertise

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Experimental Economics (Lab and Field), Development Economics, Causal Inference for Machine Learning.

## Work Experience

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**Invited Researcher:** *Jameel Poverty Action Lab, MIT* 2024 – Present

**Faculty Associate:** *Center for Effective Global Action, UC Berkeley* 2024 – Present

**Faculty Associate:** *Noyce School of Computing, Cal Poly* 2023 – Present

**Associate Professor (with tenure)** 2023 – Present

**Assistant Professor:** *California Polytechnic State University* 2017 – 2023

**Visitor:** *Joint Initiative for Latin American Experimental Economics* November-December 2025

*Class:* Visiting Researcher

**Visitor:** *Umeå University* September 2023

*Class:* Week long workshop Machine Learning for Causal Inference

**Consultant:** *ABT Associates* 2021

*Project:* Gates Cropin Evaluation - AI agricultural recognition of crop issues

**Affiliated Associate Research Scientist:** *Columbia University* 2017 – Present

*Division:* International Research Institute for Climate and Society

**Cofounder:** *Ground Truth Data LLC* 2017 - present

*Site:* groundtruthdata.com

**Instructor:** *Girls Who Code* 2016

*Classes Taught:* Introduction to CS 101 Intensive

**Postdoctoral Research Fellow:** *Columbia University* 2013 - 2016

*Classes co-Taught:* Challenges in Sustainable Development

**Consultant:** *World Bank* 2016

<i>Division:</i> Poverty and Equity Group	
<b>Consultant:</b> <i>World Bank</i>	2013
<i>Division:</i> Development Prospects Group	
<b>VP of Data and Strategy:</b> <i>ID.me</i> (formerly Troopswap)	2011 - 2012
<b>Lecturer:</b> <i>United States Naval Academy</i>	2011
<i>Classes Taught:</i> Intermediate Statistics	
<b>Consultant:</b> <i>World Bank</i>	2009 - 2010
<i>Division:</i> Development Economics Research Group	
<b>Research Associate:</b> <i>Clinton Health Access Initiative</i>	2009 - 2010
<i>Study:</i> Malaria Diagnostics Clinical Trial	
<b>Graduate Teaching Assistant:</b> <i>University of Maryland</i>	2008
<i>Sections Taught:</i> Dynamic Optimization and Optimal Control	
<b>Associate Economist:</b> <i>Federal Reserve Bank of New York</i>	2003 - 2005
<i>Division:</i> International Research	

## Visiting Positions

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- ◇ Visiting Scholar, Joint Initiative for Latin American Experimental Economics, Argentina, November-December 2025.
- ◇ Workshop Lecturer, Machine Learning for Causal Inference, Centre for Environmental and Resource Economics, Sweden, September 2023.
- ◇ Visiting Scholar, Toulouse School of Economics; Toulouse, France; September - December 2014.
- ◇ Visitor, Microsoft Research; Cambridge, Massachusetts; August 17, 2015 - August 22, 2015.

## Refereed Publications

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1. Baul, Tushi, Dean Karlan, Kentaro Toyama, Kathryn Vasilaky “Improving Smallholder Agriculture via Video-Based Group Extension” (2024) *Journal of Development Economics*. Vol. 169, No. 103267.
2. Flory, Jeff, Kenneth Leonard, Magda Tsaneva, Kathryn Vasilaky, “How social structure shapes female competition throughout her lifetime” (2023) *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*. Vol 216, pgs 433-456.
3. Vasilaky, Kathryn, Katherine Alfredo, Aurélie Harou, “What works for water conservation? Evidence from a field experiment” (2023) *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*.
4. Hamilton, Steve, Tim Richards, Aric Shafran, Kathryn Vasilaky, “Farm Labor Productivity and the Impact of Mechanization” (2022) *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, DOI:10.1111/ajae.12273
5. Ovaisi, Zohreh, Kathryn Vasilaky, Elena Zheleva, “Propensity-independent Bias Recovery in Offline Learning-to-rank Systems” (2021) *44th International ACM SIGIR Conference on*

*Research and Development in Information Retrieval (SIGIR)*). pp 1763–1767.  
DOI:10.1145/3404835

6. Ovaisi, Zohreh, Ragib Ahsan, Kathryn Vasilaky, Elena Zheleva, “Correcting for Selection Bias in Learning-to-rank Systems.” (2020) *Proceedings of the 29th International World Wide Web Conference (WWW/WebConf)*. pp. 1863–187,
7. Vasilaky, Kathryn, Michelle Brock (2020) “Power(ful) Guidelines for Experimental Economists.” *Journal of the Experimental Science Association*. Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 189-212.
8. Enenkel, M., Brown, M.E., Vogt, J.V., McCarty, J.L., Reid Bell, A.Guha-Sapir, D., Dorigo, W.A., Vasilaky, K., Svoboda, M., Bonifacio, R, Voigt, S., Anderson, M., Funk, C., Osgood, D.E., Hain, C., Vinck, P. (2020) “Why predict climate hazards if we need to understand impacts? Mobile technologies could put humans back into the equation.” *Climatic Change*. Vol. 162, pp. 1161–1176.
9. Buehren, Niklas, Joao Montalvao, Markus Goldstein, Kenneth Leonard, Kathryn Vasilaky (2020) “Spillover Effects of Girls? Empowerment on Brothers? Competitiveness: Evidence from a Lab-in-the-Field Experiment in Uganda.” *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. DOI:10.1086/713882
10. Vasilaky, Kathryn, Sofia Saenz Martinez, Radost Stanimirova, Daniel Osgood (2020) “Perceptions of Farm Size Heterogeneity and Demand for Group Index Insurance.” *Games*. Vol 11, No. 1.
11. Vasilaky, Kathryn, Rahel Diro, Geoff McCarney, Daniel Osgood (2019) “Can Education Unlock Scale? The Demand Impact of Educational Games on a Large-Scale Unsubsidised Index Insurance Programme in Ethiopia.” *Journal of Development Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2018.1554207.
12. Vasilaky, Kathryn, Asif Islam (2018) “Competition or cooperation? Using Team and Tournament Incentives for Learning among Female Farmers in Rural Uganda.” *World Development*. Vol 103, March 2018, pp. 216-225.
13. Vasilaky, Kathryn, Kenneth Leonard (2018) “As Good as the Networks They Keep?: Improving Outcomes through Weak Ties in Rural Uganda.” *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. Vol 66, No. 4 pp. 755-792.
14. Haack, Robert A., Kerry O. Britton, Eckehard G. Brockerhoff, Joseph F. Cavey, Lynn J. Garrett, Mark Kimberley, Frank Lowenstein, Amelia Nuding, Lars J. Olson, James Turner, Kathryn N. Vasilaky (2014) “Effectiveness of the International Phytosanitary Standard ISPM No. 15 on Reducing Wood Borer Infestation Rates in Wood Packaging Material Entering the United States.” *PLoS ONE*. Vol 9, No. 5.
15. Vasilaky, Kathryn (2013) “Female Social Networks and Farmer Training: Can Randomized Information Exchange Improve Outcomes.” *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*. Vol 95, No. 2 pp. 376-383.

## Working Papers

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1. Klymak, Margaryta, Andrew Kosenko, Oleg Korenok, Dariia Mykhailyshyna, Kathryn Vasilaky, “Charitable Giving in Wartime: Evidence from Ukraine’s War Fundraising.” (*R&R at Review of Economics and Statistics*)
2. Islam, Animul, Kathryn Vasilaky, Elena Zheleva, “Position bias correction through residuals” (*Requested Rebuttal at RecSys 2026*)
3. Aubrac, Charlotte, Christopher Magomba, Soumya Balasubramanya, Kathryn Vasilaky, “Realized and elicited cooperation under water scarcity: Evidence from a field experiment in Tanzania” (*Under Review*)
4. Harou, Aurélie, Kathryn Vasilaky, Chia-Ying Lee, Dan Osgood, “Timely Disaster Response and its Impacts on Poverty in the Philippines.” (*Under Review*)
5. Brock, Michelle, Kathryn Vasilaky, “Does Background Uncertainty Narrow the Gender Competition Gap? An experiment with non-students.” (*Under Review*)
6. Shafran, Aric, Kathryn Vasilaky, “Intraday farm productivity bonuses and their peer effects: Evidence from a field experiment.” (*Under Review*)
7. Doremus, Jacqueline, Charlotte Zilber Mann, Kathryn Vasilaky, “Group-Oriented Messaging and Diversity in Economics: Evidence from a Field Experiment.”
8. Shafran, Aric, Kathryn Vasilaky, “Intraday farm productivity bonuses and their peer effects: Evidence from a field experiment.” (*Under Review*)
9. Jain, Meha, Monish Deshpandea, Kathryn Vasilaky, Connor Wilson, “Selection-Aware Learning for Satellite-Based Crop Yield Prediction.”
10. Vasilaky, Kathryn N. Walter Vasilaky “Inclusive Ridge: Adaptive Shrinkage with Applications to Causal Inference.”

## Unpublished Papers

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1. Vasilaky, Kathryn, “Robust Ridge Regression for Prediction with a Stopping Rule.”
2. Shirley, Kenny, Kathryn Vasilaky, Helen Greatrex, and Daniel Osgood (2017), “Hierarchical Bayesian Estimation of Weather Index Insurance,” Columbia University Academic Commons.

## Reports

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1. Kurfess, Franz, Tina Cheuk, Kathryn Vasilaky, Elise St. John (2022). “Assessment of Ethics and Social Justice Aspects in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence.” American Society for Engineering Education Conference.
2. Mejía-Mantilla, Carolina, Ruth Hill, Kathryn Vasilaky (2017). “Input Adoption among Small-Holder Farmers: Potential and Constraints.” Poverty and Equity Global Practice, Africa Region, The World Bank.

3. Montalvao, Joao, Markus Goldstein, Kenneth Leonard, Kathryn Vasilaky (2016), “Girls’ Empowerment, Sibling Rivalry, and Competitiveness: Evidence from a Randomized Control Trial and a Lab Experiment in Uganda.” World Bank Research Paper Vol. 12, No. 33.
4. Vasilaky, Kathryn, Kenneth Leonard (2015), “Policy Implications of Social Networks and Learning.” Gender Innovation Lab Policy Brief, World Bank Report Number 103850.

### **Invited Seminar Presentations**

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1. December 2025: Joint Initiative for Latin American Experimental Economics, Buenos Aires, Argentina “Does Background Uncertainty Narrow the Gender Competition Gap? An experiment with non-students.”
2. October 2025: Kyiv School of Economics, “Does Background Uncertainty Narrow the Gender Competition Gap? An experiment with non-students.”
3. 2024: Center for Economic Institutions at Hitotsubashi University, “Intraday farm productivity bonuses and their peer effects: Evidence from a field experiment.”
4. 2024: Kobe University, Graduate School of Economics, “Intraday farm productivity bonuses and their peer effects: Evidence from a field experiment.”
5. 2021: Centre for Environmental and Resource Economics (CERE), “The effects of bonus pay when working in a team; evidence from an experiment in the field.”
6. 2018: University of Montpellier, “Learning Digitally via Mediated Farmer Edutainment in India.”
7. 2016: New York University, “An Iterative Approach to the Tikhonov Inverse Problem with a Stopping Rule.”
8. 2016: Paris School of Economics, “Learning Digitally: Evaluating the Impact of Farmer Training via Mediated Videos.”
9. 2015: Microsoft Research, Cambridge, MA, “Informal Risk Sharing and Formal Insurance: Substitutes or Complements?”
10. 2015: Microsoft Research, NY, NY, “Mechanisms of Information Exchange in Social Networks in Rural Uganda?”
11. 2014: Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne “Informal Networks within Index Insurance: Randomizing Social Distance in Group Insurance.”
12. 2014: Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique LAMETA “Informal Networks within Index Insurance: Randomizing Social Distance in Group Insurance.”
13. 2011: Development Economics Research Group, World Bank, “Mothers, Daughters and Sisters; Is Competitiveness Socialized?”
14. 2010: Yale University, “Randomizing Social Networks in Rural Uganda: New Links do Improve Outcomes.”
15. 2005: Federal Reserve Bank of New York NY, “DYNARE: Bayesian Estimation in Matlab.”

### **Conference Presentations**

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1. March 2026: Southern Europe Experimental Team, Seville, Spain “Does Background Uncertainty Narrow Market Entry? An experiment with non-students.”

2. September 2025: Advances in Field Experiments, Chicago, Illinois “Does Background Uncertainty Narrow the Gender Competition Gap? An experiment with non-students.”
3. June 2025: 100th Annual WEAI Conference. Sanfrancisco, California “Group-Oriented Messaging and Diversity in Economics: Evidence from a Field Experiment”
4. June 2024: 99th Annual WEAI Conference. Seattle, Washington, Session Chair: Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine: Exploring Its Consequences on Labor, Migration, Identity, and Charitable Giving.
5. June 2024: 99th Annual WEAI Conference. Seattle, Washington “When do people donate? The impact of events and media on military donations during Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.”
6. December 2023: LACEA LAMES Annual Meeting, Bogotá, Colombia “When the pickings are good: Estimating the dynamic effects of pay for performance for workers in the field.”
7. September 2023: Advances in Field Experiments, Chicago, Illinois “Diversity and Economic Education,” New Orleans, Louisiana “When the pickings are good: Estimating the dynamic effects of pay for performance for workers in the field.”
8. Jan 2023: American Economics Association Session “Diversity and Economic Education,” New Orleans, Louisiana “Does Marketing that Targets Prospective Female Economics Majors Improve Diversity?”
9. November 2022: Western Economic Association Economics Association, Fort Lauderdale, FL “Diversity and Economic Education,” “The effects of bonus pay when working in a team; evidence from an experiment in the field.”
10. Feb 2022: Joint Initiative for Latin American Experimental Economics (JILAEE), online, “The effects of bonus pay when working in a team; evidence from an experiment in the field.”
11. May 2021: Bay Area Behavioral and Experimental Economics Workshop (BABEEW), online, “The effects of bonus pay when working in a team; evidence from strawberry pickers in the field.”
12. July 2021: ACM SIGIR Conference on Research and development in information retrieval, “Propensity-independent Bias Recovery in Offline Learning-to-rank Systems.”
13. October 2020: The Science of Diversity Inclusion Initiative (SODI) Virtual Convening at Berkeley Haas School of Business. (Invite-only meeting)
14. March 2020: International World Wide Web Conference, “Correcting for Selection Bias in Learning-to-rank Systems.”
15. October 2019: Experimental Economics Association, Los Angeles, California, “Revealing Group Choices: the Demand for Index Insurance”
16. September 2019: Advances in Field Experiments, Chicago, Illinois, “Revealing Group Choices: the Demand for Index Insurance”
17. September 2019: Experimental Economics Association, Dijon, France, “Group Heterogeneity and the Demand for Index Insurance”
18. October 2018: Advances in Field Experiments, Boston, Massachusetts, “Groundwater Depletion in Northern India, Myself or Others?”
19. September 2018: Science of Diversity & Inclusion Initiative, The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, “Can Social Networks help de-bias Employee Evaluations?”
20. August 2018: French Association for Environmental and Resource Economics, Axes-en-Provence, France, “Learning Digitally via Mediated Farmer Edutainment in India.”

21. May 2018: Bay Area Behavioral and Experimental Economics Workshop, San Francisco, CA, “Changes in Competitiveness with Motherhood Stages and Culture: Evidence from Patrilocality and Matrilocality?”
22. October 2017: Experimental Economics Association, Richmond, Virginia, “Groundwater Depletion in Northern India, Myself or Others?”
23. March 2016: Centre for the Study of African Economies - University of Oxford, Oxford, UK, “Towards a Deeper Understanding of Female Competitiveness and the Gender Gap: Evidence from Patrilocality and Matrilocality Cultures.”
24. November 2015: Northeast Development Conference, Providence, Rhode Island, “Learning Digitally: Evaluating the Impact of Farmer Training via Mediated Videos?”
25. October 2015: Experimental Economics Association, Dallas, Texas, “Childhood, Girlhood, Motherhood: Is Competitiveness Socialized?”
26. March 2015: Centre for the Study of African Economies - University of Oxford, Oxford, UK, “As Good as the Networks They Keep? Mechanisms of Information Exchange in Social Networks in Rural Uganda?”
27. December 2014: Symposium on Economic Experiments, Bergen, Norway, “Informal Networks within Index Insurance: Randomizing Social Distance in Group Insurance.”
28. November 2014: Northeast Development Conference, Boston, Massachusetts, “Informal Networks within Index Insurance: Randomizing Social Distance in Group Insurance?”
29. September 2014: Postdoctoral Data Science Panel, New York, NY, “Data Science in the Social Sciences.”
30. June 2014: 17th Annual Conference on Global Economic Analysis, Dakar, Senegal, “Demographic Transition, Education, and Inequality in India.”
31. September 2012: Workshop on Information in Networks, New York, NY, “As Good as the Networks They Keep? Mechanisms of Information Exchange in Rural Uganda.”
32. July 2010: World Meeting of the Economic Science Association, Copenhagen, Denmark “Institutional Incentives for Information Exchange: Information Games in Rural Uganda.”
33. May 2009: Midwest International Economic Development Conference Minneapolis, MN, “The Effects of School Quality on Fertility in Ukraine.”
34. May 2009: Population Association of America (PAA) Detroit, MI, “The Effects of School Quality on Fertility in Ukraine.”

## Grants, Honors and Awards

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- ◇ 2026-2027: Principal Investigator, *JPAL’s European Social Inclusion Initiative*, “Reintegrating Internally Displaced Persons, Veterans, and Women in the Post-Invasion Labor Market in Ukraine”
- ◇ 2026-2027: Principal Investigator, *CEGA’s Fall 2025 Development Economics Challenge*, “Reintegrating Internally Displaced Persons, Veterans, and Women in the Post-Invasion Labor Market in Ukraine” Amount: \$11,250.
- ◇ 2025-2026: Principal Investigator, *Innovations for Poverty Action Displaced Livelihoods Initiative*, “War, Identity and its Economic Consequences in Ukraine” Amount: \$9,961
- ◇ 2025-2026: Principal Investigator, *Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities, RSCA*, “Addressing Prediction Biases in Agricultural Yields with Remote Sensing,” Amount: \$12,500.
- ◇ 2025-2026: Principal Investigator, *California Polytechnic Teacher-Scholar Grant*, “War,

- Identity and its Economic Consequences in Ukraine,” Amount: \$14,664.
- ◇ 2025-2026: Principal Investigator, *Innovations for Poverty Action*, “War, Identity and its Economic Consequences in Ukraine,” Amount: \$9,961.
  - ◇ 2024-2025: Principal Investigator, *Noyce School of Computing*, “Selection Bias in Learning to Rank Systems,” Amount: \$15,000.
  - ◇ 2020-2021: Co Principal Investigator, *Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities, RSCA*, “Nudging Women into Business and Economics,” Amount: \$18,000.
  - ◇ 2019-2020: Principal Investigator, *Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities, RSCA*, “Correcting for Selection Bias in Learning-to-rank Systems,” Amount: \$8,985.
  - ◇ 2019-2021: Co-Investigator, *United States Department of Agriculture, AFRI*, “Immigration Reform And Farm Labor Shortages,” Amount: \$500,000.
  - ◇ 2016-2018: Principal Investigator, *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grand Challenges*, “Multimodal Satellite Rainfall Measurement for Index Insurance” Grant Number OPP1150740, Amount: \$100,000.
  - ◇ 2015-2017: Co-Investigator, *World Bank, International Finance Corporation*, “Evaluating the Timeliness of Disaster Response” Grant Number 7176127, Amount: \$200,000.
  - ◇ 2015-2017: Principal Investigator, *Earth Clinic Grant, Columbia University*, “SMS Based System for Rainfall Reporting,” Amount: \$31,000.
  - ◇ 2015-2017: Principal Investigator, *Cross Cutting Initiatives Grant, Columbia University*, “India Water Depletion Study,” Amount: \$32,000.
  - ◇ 2009-2010: PhD Thesis, *Africa Gender Innovation Lab of the World Bank*, “Social Networks in Uganda,” Amount: \$20,000.

## Professional Service

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### Referee:

*Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS) 2024, International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR) 2025, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Environmental Economics and Management, Experimental Economics, Review of Economics and Statistics, The Economic Journal, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, World Development, Climatic Change, International Food Policy Research Institute, Agricultural Economics, Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*

## University Service

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Academic Senate Curriculum Committee OCOB representative 2023-2026; Undergraduate Programs Committee co-chair; Economics Society faculty advisor; Economics brownbag organizer; BEACON mentor; Chair of Ethics and Social Justice Committee, member of Educational Initiatives Committee, and member of Training Committee for the [Data Strategic Research Initiative at Cal Poly](#); [Hands-on data science workshops for faculty at Cal Poly](#); Organizer and co-founder of PyData San Luis Obispo; Reviewer for Earth Institute, Columbia University Undergraduate Research Awards

## Languages

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Python, SQL, Stata, R, Ukrainian, Spanish, French.