



# Laterite

## High-quality research for social impact

Ethiopia | Kenya | Rwanda | Sierra Leone | Tanzania | Uganda | Netherlands

[www.laterite.com](http://www.laterite.com) | @LateriteAfrica

laterite  
DATA | RESEARCH | ANALYTICS



# About Laterite

We combine data, research, and analytics to help organizations maximize the social impact of their work.

Our team specializes in **full cycle research projects** and **evaluations** to support effective decision-making.

Our approach is **data-intensive** and embedded in the **local context**.

We offer tested data collection systems, a large pool of enumerators, an expert research and innovations team, and a thorough understanding of the countries where we work.

## Where we work



**Ethiopia**  
Est 2016



**Kenya**  
Est 2018



**Rwanda**  
Est 2010



**Sierra Leone**  
Est 2023



**Tanzania**  
Est 2021



**Uganda**  
Est 2018



In addition, our team in the Netherlands is a partner for research and development organizations interested in strengthening their learning and evaluation systems.

# Laterite: facts and figures

Founded in **Rwanda** in 2010

**80+ team** mostly based in East and West Africa

**1,500+ enumerators**, moderators, note takers, translators, and supervisors

Some of **our clients**  
in **2022**

World Bank

IFPRI

FHI360

UNU-MERIT

ODI

TechnoServe

Mastercard Foundation

Save the Children

SNV

AGRA



## Our mission

We make development research more impactful, by using rigorous and cutting-edge techniques to provide evidence that responds to the needs of the local context.



## Our vision

Laterite aims to be a leading provider of research and evidence to support organizations to maximize their social impact in the countries where we work.

# laterite

DATA | RESEARCH | ANALYTICS

High-quality research for social impact



## Data.

We provide experienced field teams, all the equipment and structured processes to ensure high-quality data.

## Research.

We deliver full-cycle research and evaluation projects, from sample design to policy recommendations.

## Analytics.

We deploy artificial intelligence, machine learning and geospatial data to make research more effective.



# Our sectors



Agriculture



Education



Public Health



Urbanization,  
climate  
& migration



Youth &  
livelihoods





# Agriculture

Laterite has hands-on experience with agriculture and rural development projects across East Africa.

We have significant experience in the design and implementation of large impact evaluations, including yield measurements. We have worked on quantitative surveys, perception and attitudes studies, and secondary data analysis. Many of our projects explore the intersection of agriculture and other themes such as livelihoods, gender, and public health.

## Some of our clients



### Project spotlight:

#### Gender-based drivers of agricultural best practice adoption

We designed and implemented a study to understand the drivers of best practices adoption among teff farmers in Ethiopia, and how gender plays a role. Laterite managed the entire research cycle from research design, to quant & qual data collection in 1,500 households, to analysis and insights.





# Education

We have worked on projects across all levels of the education system: basic, secondary, university, and vocational.

We have experience in student learning outcomes, school dropout and transitions, self-centered learning, gender, school leadership and teacher quality, and EdTech. In addition to interviews, we use methods such as literacy and numeracy assessments (e.g. EGRA, EGMA) and classroom observations.

## Some of our clients



### Project spotlight:

#### Improving learning through classroom experience

We are working with Fab Inc in a project in Tanzania funded by FCDO to explore the impacts of environment (temperature, light intensity, and acoustics) on the classroom experiences.



# Public Health

Laterite has worked on projects focused on nutrition and food security, early childhood development, sexual and reproductive health, and access to health services.

Our portfolio includes desk-based assessments and landscape analysis, as well as large mixed-methods surveys involving thousands of households and methods such as anthropometric measurements or environmental monitoring.

## Some of our clients



### Project spotlight:

#### Evaluation of an early childhood development program

We are working with Boston College on a multi-year evaluation of the Sugira Muryango early childhood development intervention in Rwanda, set up to encourage responsive parent-child interactions and increased family well-being





# Urbanization, climate & migration

Laterite works on projects focusing on the social and economic impacts of urban development in East Africa.

To date, this work has included research on informal settlements and the economic geography of secondary cities. We have a special interest in understanding the impacts of climate change on urban and rural communities. Our research on migration focuses on livelihoods and economic impacts for both refugees and host communities, including in response to COVID-19.

## Some of our clients



### Project spotlight:

#### Supporting research with refugee households

For the past three years we have been working with UNU-MERIT on a yearly data collection survey of refugee households on three refugee settlements in Kenya, to provide insight into the food security, nutrition, livelihoods, and well-being. [Case study](#)



# Youth & livelihoods

Laterite's previous and ongoing collaborations in this sector include projects on youth and adolescence, transitions from school to work, employment and employability, economic empowerment, and financial inclusion.

We have extensive experience with projects focusing on social protection programs, especially in Ethiopia, and with impact evaluations of programs focused on livelihoods of farming households.

## Some of our clients



### Project spotlight:

#### Assessing the effectiveness of a social security program in Ethiopia

We worked with the World Bank in Ethiopia to assess the effectiveness of the livelihoods pathway of the PSNP program in promoting increased economic inclusion and income, and increased resilience for its members.





# Our strengths

# Our strengths



## Local knowledge

We rely on local teams to generate context-specific data & insights.



## Focus on quality

We work to build quality control into every step of the research and data collection process.



## Full-cycle support

We are a partner for all steps of the research process: from design to data collection to analysis.



## Dignity first

We advise our partners on how to adhere to local ethics and research permit requirements.





Our strengths



**Local knowledge**

# Local knowledge, local insights



## Founded in East Africa

Laterite started operations in Rwanda in 2010. Our roots and the majority of our teams are in East Africa. We believe that being based in the countries where we work is essential to designing and carrying out good research.



## 10+ years of experience

Since 2010, we have led hundreds of surveys and research projects across East Africa, from pilot studies to in-person interviews of 5,000+ respondents, from tracer studies to impact evaluations to multi-partner learning partnerships.



## Trusted local partner

Our teams understand the intricacies of the local context and can guide partners through the research process, from obtaining local approvals and planning to minimize attrition, to designing sampling approaches or instruments optimized to the context.





# Ethiopia

## Office: Addis Ababa

- Laterite Ethiopia was founded in 2016 and Addis Ababa is one of our fastest growing offices.
- Our project portfolio in Ethiopia ranges from data collection (including mixed-methods), full-cycle research assessments, to long-term monitoring and evaluation partnerships.
- The Ethiopia team works across all Laterite's key sectors, with a focus on agriculture and youth & livelihoods.

In 2022, our enumerators in Ethiopia clocked **19,116 days** of work and completed **75,473 surveys** for **11** projects

## Example projects in 2022

**Gender and Adolescence Global Evidence – GAGE (ODI):** Through 2019 to 2022, Laterite and GAGE conducted 3 rounds of data collection with ~8,000 boys and girls on topics covering health and wellbeing, education, voice and agency, and economic empowerment.

**Evaluation of the group Problem Management plus intervention (IFPRI):** The intervention, developed by WHO in 2013 to address mental health problems such as depression, stress and anxiety, was implemented in Oromia and Amhara, in 272 villages across 72 kebeles. Laterite was IFPRI's data collection partner and managed all aspects of a survey that reached 3,800 participants (listing, baseline and endline).



# Kenya

## Office: Nairobi

- Laterite Kenya opened in 2018 and since then has expanded to a fully-fledged team of researchers and data collection experts.
- Our team in Nairobi is involved in long-term learning partnerships in the areas of agriculture and nutrition, coffee farming and education, and has also delivered a range of data collection projects, from school observations to phone surveys with refugee households.

## Example projects in 2022

**IGNITE:** Laterite Kenya is working with Tanager and 60 Decibels on IGNITE, a program designed to support African agriculture institutions. Within this context, we partnered with AGRA, Sasakawa Africa Association and Digital Green in the design and implementation of research projects set up to integrate nutrition-sensitive and gender-integrated approaches into their interventions.

**Data collection and research in refugee settlements:** In 2022, Laterite Kenya completed a survey in three refugee settlements in Kenya, reaching 2,100 households to provide insight into the food security, nutrition, livelihoods, and well-being.

## Some of our clients in Kenya





# Rwanda

## Office: Kigali

- Laterite was founded in Rwanda in 2010, and Kigali remains our oldest and largest office, both in terms of team size and volume of work.
- The Rwanda team works across all our key sectors with a focus on education, public health and early childhood development.
- They have extensive experience in large scale data collection campaigns and impact-driven research projects.

In 2022, our enumerators in Ethiopia clocked **3,617 days** of work and completed over **11,000 surveys** for **7** projects

## Example projects in 2022

**Leaders in Teaching:** Laterite is and REAL Centre are the learning partners of LIT – a Mastercard Foundation initiative to improve teaching quality in secondary education in Rwanda. Laterite is responsible for generating evidence to improve programming and learning outcomes, including through a large-scale mixed-methods longitudinal study of teachers, head teachers, Secondary 3 mathematics students and education officials in 350 schools.

**Sugira Muryango evaluation:** Laterite is working with Boston College on a longitudinal study to assess the impact of this early childhood development intervention. Data collection reached 1,000 households to examine the intervention's effects and spill-over impact.



# Uganda

## Office: Kampala

- Laterite opened an office in Kampala in 2018.
- The Uganda team has since managed some of our largest and most demanding data collection projects with hundreds of enumerators deployed
- They work across all our sectors, with a special interest in Public Health, Migration and Education, where they are active contributors to our learning partnerships.

**Project spotlight:** Laterite Uganda is leading all aspects of data collection for the evaluation of the Uganda Coffee Agronomy Training (UCAT) program – a 3-year Randomized Control Trial led by IFPRI and Harvard University. This included testing survey instruments, recruitment and training of enumerator teams, survey operations, and quality assurance.



UCAT is, to date, Laterite's largest data collection project: a team of 124 enumerators spent 6,875 field days to complete 11,217 surveys in coffee-farming households.

# Tanzania

## Office: Dar es Salaam

- Laterite Tanzania started operations in 2021.
- Highlights from 2022: the team worked on a phone survey with the entire pool of 5,033 Village-Based Advisors in Tanzania. VBAs with new businesses took part in 3-round tracer study. The team also conducted 20 key informant interviews with government extension agents & officials.

### Upcoming projects

Monitoring and evaluation of GIZ's program for employment and skills for development: Laterite Tanzania will work with GIZ to conduct data collections, aggregations and data analysis to support implementation of monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Improving learning through classroom experience in East Africa: We will work with Fab Inc in a project funded by FCDO to investigate the impacts of Temperature, Lighting, and Sound Quality. The project will reach 48 schools.





# Sierra Leone

## Office: Freetown

- Laterite Sierra Leone started operations in March 2023.
- First office in West Africa, building on Laterite's experience of 100 projects with multilaterals, NGOs, development agencies and local governments.
- The Laterite Sierra Leone team is looking forward to supporting clients to carry out high-impact research projects in the country. Please get in touch if you would like to learn more about our team about.

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Our strengths

★★★ **Focus on quality**

# Teams dedicated to data collection

Our goal is to collect high-quality data to support evidence-based insights

We have two specialist teams to supervise high-quality data collection

## Data Team:

- Responsible for data collection operations: planning & budgeting, enumerator recruitment & training, quality control, local approvals and permits, troubleshooting
- Expertise in project management and field work coordination
- Solid understanding of country-specific context
- Local staff, including quantitative and qualitative specialists

## Data Quality Team:

- Responsible for quality assurance tasks, including data auditing and monitoring and data cleaning
- Expertise in STATA, SurveyCTO and survey data manipulation
- Design and implement monitoring dashboards and automated tools for data quality control.

# Quality assurance starts in the field

Our standard procedures include:



## Hiring talented enumerators

University graduates with demonstrated survey experience



## Clear communications

Effective channels to ensure field teams are on the same page



## Continuous supervision

Experienced coordinators to manage performance and give ongoing feedback. We also nurture and keep track of our most talented enumerators



## Rigorous training

Tried and tested curricula to prepare enumerators for field work. We also provide opportunities for personal development & continuous learning



## IRR for quality assurance

A little math can go a long way!  
For observational assessments, where bias can become an issue, we use Inter-Rater Reliability measures to improve enumerator training and performance.

*From our blog:*

[IRR as a tool to reduce bias in surveys](#)



# Real-time monitoring dashboards

## We monitor incoming survey data with Google Sheet dashboards

- Dashboards integrated with SurveyCTO
- Updated in real time, provide a live stream of data for monitoring and progress reporting
- Can be customized with indicators according to the requirements of each project
- Shared with all partners to guarantee transparency
- Can be used to rectify issues as field work is ongoing, allowing field supervisors to take corrective measures
- Part of our standard operational procedure

Example monitoring dashboard, designed for a project to track the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

No. of complete interviews (with consent)	1210	
Survey Target	1326	
Survey Completion (%)	91%	
Households called	1327	100%
Households reached (who responded)	1210	91%

Key outcomes			
		#	%
AWARENESS	Respondents that know about locusts	1201	99%
	Respondents that know about fall anyworm	1059	88%
PROTECTIVE MEASURES	1. Washed hands for 20 seconds or more with soap?	1204	100%
	2. Avoided large gatherings / long queues? (such as at church or at markets)	900	74%
	3. Kept at least 2 adult steps away from others	1118	92%
	4. Avoided public transportation	877	72%
	5. Avoided shaking hands or kissing on cheeks	1194	99%
	6. Avoided touching my face	1050	87%
	7. Used hand sanitizers / disinfectants	462	38%
	8. Worn face masks	790	65%
STRESS	Respondent's stresslevel on a scale from 1 (I am not stressed at all) to 10 (I am extremely stressed).	7.94	N/A
INCOME	Total HH income increased since the R1 interview	45	4%
	Total HH income stayed the same since the R1 interview	419	35%
	Total HH income decreased since from the R1 interview	760	63%
	Total loss of HH income since the R1 interview	6	0%
CROP DAMAGE	Crops have been damaged by desert locusts	148	12%
	Vegetation on grazing land has been reduced by desert locusts	105	9%
	Crops have been damaged by fall anyworms	534	44%

# Procedures to manage attrition

Our protocol to mitigate attrition rates in multi-round & longitudinal data collection activities includes:



## **Observe local customs**

We plan around community events such as market days, feast days, religious holidays



## **Appointment calls**

We invest time in calling ahead to set up convenient times to visit respondents



## **Liaise with local authorities**

to plan the most efficient way to visit respondents, and to earn the trust and support of the community



## **Allocate wrap-up time**

Schedule a number of days at the end for additional attempt to contact previously unreachable respondents



Laterite Ethiopia managed data collection for the impact evaluation of the SPIR program (with IFPRI): from a target of 4,062 respondents at midline, we completed 3,968 surveys (97.7%)

Our strengths



**Full cycle support**



# Full-cycle research support

In-house capacity to manage projects from start to finish, from research design to primary data collection, analysis and reporting.



Our **Research & Economist teams** combine knowledge of research designs, sampling, survey-methodological and econometric analyses techniques, with experience managing projects using a variety of study designs.



Each Laterite office has a full-time **Data team** specialized in the operational logistics of large surveys. Our structured approach is embedded in the local context, drawing on our experience with 100+ data collection projects across East Africa.

We have experience conducting randomized controlled trials, quasi-experimental, qualitative and tracer studies, full-cycle from research design to data collection and analyses. We innovate by connecting survey data to geospatial data derived from remote sensing and use cutting-edge analysis techniques at the intersection of econometrics and machine learning. Laterite has in-depth expertise using a wide variety of econometric analysis techniques such as synthetic control methods, regression discontinuity designs, instrumental variable estimation, and difference-in-difference techniques.



# From design to analysis & reporting

We have teams specialized in all stages of the research process

**Economists:** research methodologies and design, econometric and machine learning techniques, inc. sampling, power calculations, and integration of geospatial data

**Data:** manage all aspects of field work: planning & budgeting, enumerator recruitment & training, quality control, local approvals and permits, troubleshooting

**Data Quality:** backend monitoring and auditing infrastructure, including real-time dashboards for data quality monitoring; data cleaning

**Program:** multidisciplinary experts in data collection, field logistics and research implementation who run the day to day operations & project management

**Research:** responsible for all technical and analytical work, from design through to analysis, reporting, insights and recommendations

**Communications:** report editing and proof reading, dissemination strategies for key results and insights, expertise in science writing, public policy and development

# Our approach

Laterite's research philosophy is guided by three principles



## **Embedded in the local context:**

We believe that delivering impactful research requires building a local team, understanding the context, establishing close working relationships on the ground.



## **Actionable insights:**

Our priority is to ensure our research is impactful and designed to answer the questions our clients have. We also put a strong emphasis on ensuring that our research is fit for purpose, timely and pertinent for our clients.



## **Drive for innovation:**

Laterite's approach is data and innovation driven, without being bound by the "rules" of a particular field. We draw on a range of analysis techniques from different disciplines, including econometrics, data science, economic complexity, network theory, biology and engineering.



# Data

# Data collection

10+ years of experience in data collection in East Africa



## Large scale surveys

We can quickly mobilize our network of 2,000+ enumerators, field coordinators and translators for large scale field surveys



## Phone surveys

We have the know-how, infrastructure and procedures in place to conduct fully remote data collection projects



## Qualitative data collection

Our qualitative data specialists have ample experience leading and transcribing focus group discussions, key informant interviews



## Complex methods

We have experience with anthropometric / biometric data, classroom observation, student learning assessments, early childhood development assessments and environmental monitoring



In 2022, our enumerators spent

**30,696 days** in the field,  
(84 years worth of work!)

and completed...

**102,642** surveys

**109** focus group discussions

**333** key informant interviews

**794** reading assessments

**383** classroom observations

# Large scale surveys

## High-quality data collection services.

- Our Data Teams manage all aspects of the data collection including: training and hiring enumerators, permits and approvals, field logistics, data quality and control.
- We have 10+ years of experience in East Africa and our thorough approach ensures a smooth data collection process with minimal attrition and high-quality data.
- Our team specializes in coding surveys on electronic platforms and implementing CAPI surveys in SurveyCTO.

More about our approach from our blog:

- > [\*Ain't no mountain high enough: collecting data in Ethiopia\*](#)
- > [\*How to prepare for fieldwork in a new location in Kenya\*](#)
- > [\*How to build an enumerator team from scratch\*](#)



### Project spotlight:

#### Evaluation of the Expansion of the Sugira Muryango Intervention (Boston College)

Mixed methods data collection to investigate the impact of the three-district expansion of an intervention to encourage parent-child interactions and discourage violence and harsh punishment.



# Qualitative data collection

Extensive experience with qualitative research methods.

- We have experience in designing qualitative research as the main survey instrument, or as a tool to provide nuance to quantitative findings.
- Our Data Team includes qualitative research specialists to manage all aspects of focus group discussions, key informant interviews and semi-structured interviews.
- In addition to data collection, our team can transcribe, translate, code and analyze data from qualitative research instruments.

Examples of our qualitative data collection from our blog:

- > [Studying financial inclusion: Asking questions about algorithms](#)
- > [Gender dynamics in Ethiopian wheat farming households](#)



In 2022, our enumerators completed:

**109** focus group discussions

**333** key informant interviews

# Phone surveys

All the know how and infrastructure to conduct phone surveys.

- Our team understands the implications of remote methodologies on research questions and survey instruments, and can advise on how to design or adapt research tools accordingly.
- In 2020-2022, Laterite managed over 50 phone survey data collection projects using CATI software (SurveyCTO). Many of these projects were structured as high-frequency surveys, with multiple rounds (up to ten) of data collection.
- We have a tried and tested protocol to train and supervise phone survey teams, honed through our work for clients such as the World Bank, the IGC or the GAGE program.

Blog post: [Data collection and COVID-19: insights on phone surveys](#)



In 2022, our enumerators completed **23,131** phone interviews for projects across East Africa



# Talented field teams

In 2022, Laterite worked with 1,337 enumerators



**569** women  
and  
**768** men

They have diverse backgrounds, but **all** have (at least) a Bachelor degree. Most of them studied:



Agriculture



Economics



Public Health



Statistics

In 2022, they spent **30,696 days** in the field (84 years worth of work!) and completed...

**102,642** surveys

**109** focus group discussions

**333** key informant interviews

**794** reading assessments

**383** classroom observations

**sometimes in very tough conditions**

asante - murakoze - እናመሰግናለን

mwebale nyo - thank you!





# Research

# Research and evaluations

Our approach is data-intensive. Our insights are grounded in local context.



## Data analysis

Our aim is to provide rigorous, constructive, context-relevant insights that support decision-making. We draw on a range of techniques to extract insights and knowledge from data: econometrics, data science, economic complexity, network theory, biology and machine learning.



## Learning partnerships

We support organizations to design learning strategies that directly feed into their operations. We develop learning agendas, support research and evaluation project design, and provide training on research methods. We can also lend our research expertise at all stages of the monitoring, evaluation and learning cycle.



## Program and impact evaluations

We specialize in rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental research designs, as well as tracer studies and process evaluations. We always prefer mixed-methods approaches. We have worked on topics such as gender, education, teacher training, migration, cash transfers, poverty reduction and agriculture programs.



## Monitoring and evaluation diagnostics

Our diagnostic tool supports our partners to improve M&E systems and use them efficiently to maximize impact. Grounded in our experience in research design, data collection and analysis, we work with clients to understand the strengths and gaps in their M&E systems and design tailored support. For example, we can provide support on defining participation and selection criteria; developing a theory of change; integrating gender inclusive approaches; and implementing operational plans.



# Data analysis

## Context-relevant insights to support decision-making.

We draw from on econometrics, data science, economic complexity, network theory and machine learning, and our local expertise to extract actionable insights and knowledge from data.

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### Willingness to pay for micro-insurance

With GGGI, we studied the willingness to pay for two insurance products of 1,180 smallholder farmers in rural Ethiopia. We learned that price anchoring plays an important role in determining their decision-making.

More information:

[Policy brief](#) | [Full report](#)

### The economic geography of Rwanda

We used gravity models to study internal trade links between districts in Rwanda and to understand the economic role of secondary cities, in a project with the International Growth Center.

More information:

[Summary](#) | [Policy brief](#)

### Dropout and repetition in Rwandan schools

We designed a research study based on primary data collected from 8,000 children, to identify the drivers of dropout and repetition and inform the development of a new evidence-based policy.

More information:

[Policy brief](#)



# Program and impact evaluations

Rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental designs.

We design and implement program and impact evaluations grounded in data and local context. Our evaluation experience covers topics such as gender or poverty reduction programs.



Evaluation spotlight:

## **Great Lakes emergency sexual and gender-based violence program in Rwanda**

In collaboration with the World Bank's Gender Innovation Lab, MIGEPROF Rwanda commissioned an evaluation to assess the impact of a behavioral change intervention to prevent intimate partner violence. The evaluation aimed to provide empirical evidence on the impact of the couples training on outcomes, spillover effects of the couples training at various levels, and the impact of behavior-change interventions on economic outcomes.



# Learning partnerships

Monitoring and evaluation strategies that add value to operations.

We develop learning agendas, we design monitoring and evaluation strategies, and provide training on research methods. Our goal is always to generate insights that directly add value to operations.

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## Mastercard Foundation: Leaders in Teaching

Laterite is working with the Mastercard Foundation and the REAL Centre on the monitoring, evaluation, research and learning for the LIT initiative to support teachers throughout their careers. We are assessing LIT's impact on teacher performance and student learning in secondary schools, while working with all partners to establish a process of continuous learning and capacity building.

More on LIT: [Research and Policy Paper Series](#)

## TechnoServe: East Africa coffee program

Laterite has embedded research advisors within TechnoServe's East Africa coffee team, working to ensure harmony between operations and evaluation. Our team is developing the program's monitoring and evaluation and impact evaluation strategy. Laterite also oversees all data collection efforts and leads data analysis to build greater opportunities for learning into TechnoServe's M&E systems.

More information: [Case study](#)

# Learning partnerships: IGNITE program

We are working with **Tanager** on **IGNITE** – a 5-year, multi-country program funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to strengthen African institutions' ability to integrate nutrition-sensitive and gender-integrated approaches into their interventions. As a Learning Partner, Laterite's role includes:



## Developing a theory of change and learning agenda

Use these to provide monitoring and evaluation support to Tanager, as well as IGNITE clients to identify models that demonstrate increased consumption of nutritious diets and increased women's empowerment in agriculture.



## Training & capacity building in M&E

Laterite worked with African agricultural institutions to provide M&E training on gender-sensitive data collection and gender-sensitive indicators, and on how to deploy the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index as a survey instrument.



## Client-focused research

We are leading research studies with IGNITE clients to measure key gender and nutrition outcomes and support decision-making, including:

- Study of gender-specific drivers of good agricultural practice adoption for teff farmers in Ethiopia (Sasakawa Africa Association)
- Study of who benefits from time savings from farm mechanization in Nigeria (AATF)
- Study of paths to a business for women, men, and youth village-based advisors in Tanzania (AGRA)
- Study of household decision-making and best practice adoption outcomes of women-targeted digital extension in Ethiopia (Digital Green)



# Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Our approach is data-intensive and grounded in the local context.

We support organizations in the development of learning agendas and M&E strategies to generate actionable insights that add value to operations. Specifically, we work with organizations to:



## Set up a MEL framework for organizations or programs

Based on an existing Theory of Change, or starting from the development of one



## Restructure an existing MEL framework

To respond better to evolving requirements or to incorporate a local perspective



## Advise and build MEL capacity

To strengthen our partners' capacities to maintain and evolve responsive MEL frameworks



# Our philosophy

Laterite's approach to MEL frameworks is grounded in the following principles:

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## Less is more

Most MEL frameworks collect a whole range of data, but stop short of extracting insights to make better program decisions. We believe that each scenario has a limit to the data that can be processed to generate insights. Therefore we advocate collecting the least amount possible of data to add value and confidence to insights.

## Method agnostic

We believe that research questions and goals of a MEL framework should determine the technical approach. Our team does not specialize in or advocate for a specific MEL method. We have implementation experience and we can advise on the most appropriate methodology for each scenario.

## Local context

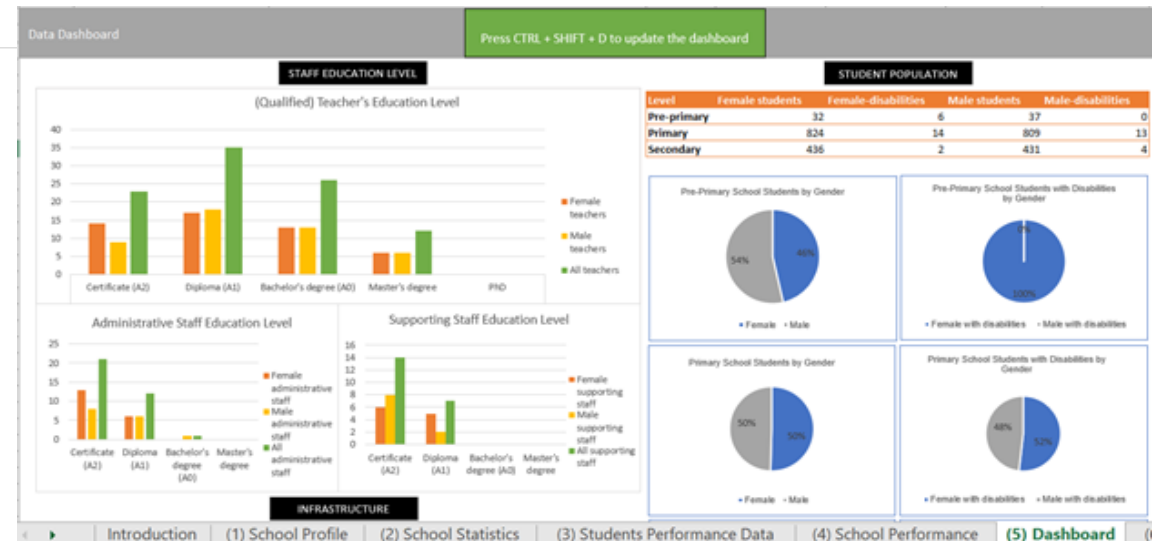
Laterite was founded in Rwanda in 2010 with a mission to bring high-quality research to underserved markets, and with a goal to move away from the 'fly in fly out' model. The majority of our teams are in East Africa, embedded in the local context. We believe that this is essential to understand what is feasible and what is not.

# Case study: program evaluation dashboard

We worked with VVOB to develop a MEL dashboard for the 'Leading Teaching and Learning Together' initiative

## How we did it:

- We used open source tools such as Kobo Toolbox and R to manage data collection, cleaning and analysis processes.
- After multiple feedback rounds and pilot testing led by VVOB, Laterite developed a ready-to-use Excel tool which automates data entry and visualization. The tool is password-protected and users can only edit cells that explicitly require their input.
- We conducted training sessions for VVOB staff and produced documentation for further use.



VVOB and the Rwanda Education Board are now using the Excel tool in the context of their programs for Continuous Professional Development.

Case study: [Technical solutions for managing data in the education sector](#)

From our blog: [The Laterite guide to R-Shiny dashboards](#)

# Analytics



# Analytics

We deploy artificial intelligence and geospatial data tools to make research more effective.

We believe that innovation can bring an edge to socio-economic development research. We use cutting-edge econometric and machine learning techniques in our analyses.



**AI-enabled tools** have the power to accelerate repetitive tasks and free up time for reflection and learning.

They can open up new avenues of research and add layers of evidence to inform effective decision-making.



**Geospatial data** strengthens insights from econometric analysis and geographically contextualizes those insights.

This leads to high quality spatial predictions on development-related indicators.



# AI tools to accelerate research

Time-saving research apps for time-sinking tasks.

Designing survey research takes a lot of time. Some of that time is spent on repetitive tasks, such as coding a survey, cleaning data or analyzing qualitative data.

Laterite is developing a set of tools to answer these challenges, using AI technologies.

We are currently in alpha mode testing and you will soon be able to check out our first batch of tools.

[Subscribe to our newsletter to stay tuned.](#)

## Laterite AI tools can be used to:

**Expedite research instrument development:** code ODK surveys faster and manage translation quality

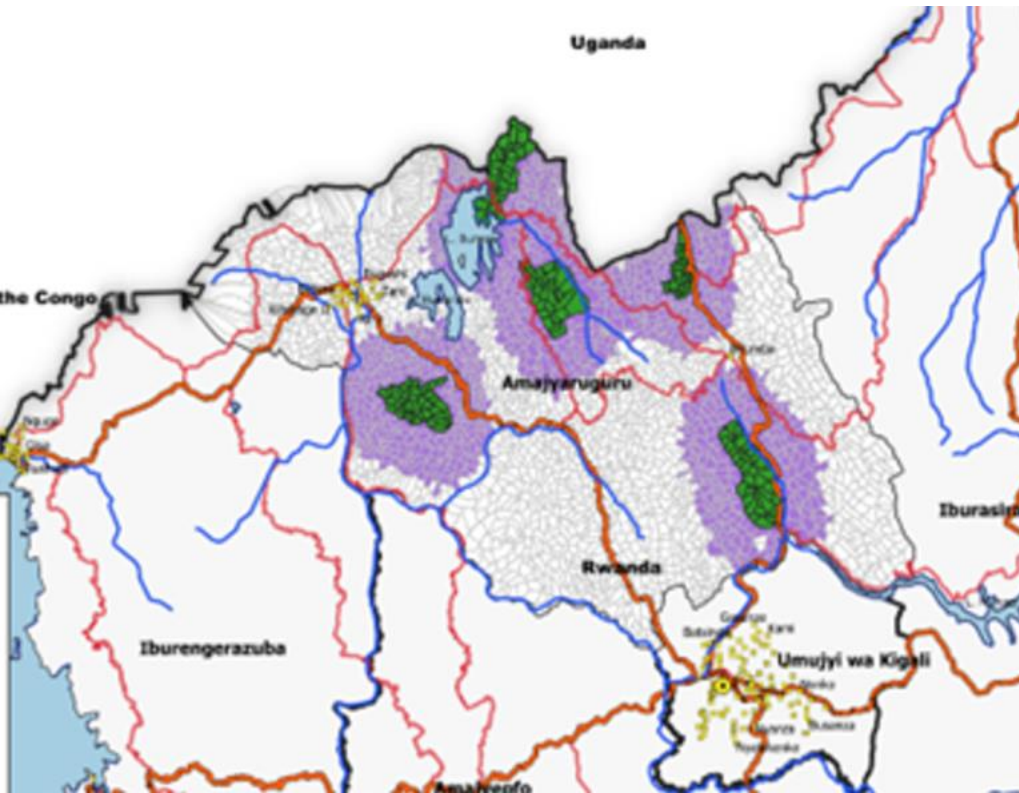
**Speed up qualitative data analysis:** cluster open-ended responses by theme & categorize or tag text

**Explore quantitative data insights:** automate analysis and translate numerical outcomes into insights

# Geospatial data integration

## Augmenting insights from survey data.

We combine survey data with highly granular geospatial data (e.g. remote sensing, land cover & use, soil composition, climate and related information, socio-demographic data), collated in our geospatial database. Integrating geospatial data brings two advantages: it strengthens the insights from econometric analysis and allows for those insights to be geographically contextualized.



Geospatial data use case:

### Matching treatment and control groups

We were given a list of 164 villages earmarked to participate a village-level microgrant program for an impact evaluation commissioned by Spark Microgrants. Our task was to select a suitable comparison group to use as counterfactual, but surveying 1,000 villages for this goal was not efficient. Our solution was to use geospatial data and matching techniques to determine which villages would be selected as comparison group.

From our blog: [Matching treatment and control groups with geospatial data](#)

Our strengths



**Dignity first**



# Dignity first

Laterite is first and foremost a social project with a mission to bring high-quality research services to underserved markets.

We recognize the enormous contribution of our research participants, and we work to prioritize their safety, their rights and their dignity.



**Survey length:** shorter surveys yield higher quality data and are more respectful of people's routine



**Safeguarding:** We take seriously our duty of care and recognize that the wellbeing of respondents must come first.



**Local customs:** we always make an effort to integrate the routines of local communities in our field work planning



**Local approvals:** we always seek IRB approvals and research permits at all levels before conducting any data collection or research work



# Focus on safeguarding

Protecting vulnerable respondents during research on sensitive topics.

We work with diverse respondents, including young people, refugees, and people living in remote areas, to seek insights into sensitive topics - ranging from gender and household dynamics, to adolescence, to sexual and gender-based violence.

We take seriously our duty of care to respondents and recognize that their wellbeing must always come first.

If we are not confident that we can carry out research in a way that minimizes risks of harm to respondents, we will not take on the project.

**We protect vulnerable respondents through our:**

**Child safeguarding guidelines:** our policies for working with children and young people, including reporting structures to prioritize wellbeing of the children involved

**Risk of harm protocols:** with clear protocols for identifying and reporting risks of harm, and providing referrals to services such as counseling or other support

**Techniques to guarantee privacy:** including the use of audio computer-assisted self-interviewing (ACASI) to protect respondents' privacy on the most sensitive topics

# Approvals and permits



## Local permits and ethics approvals are an added value to a research project

- We obtain a local Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and seek permissions at all required local levels before conducting any data collection or research work
- Our good relationships with local authorities are key to smooth and safe interviewing for our respondents and enumerators
- Our experience shows that this is not just the right thing to do: compliance with local regulations is a key driver of data quality

More information on local procedures

- > [Ethics approvals and research permits in East Africa](#)
- > Our views on why [local approvals are a strength, not a waste of time](#)

High-level overview of national approvals and permits requirements

	Ethics approvals	Research permits
	Issued by local IRB	LoS by a federal ministry
	Issued by local IRB	Issued by NACOSTI
	Rwanda National Ethics Committee	Issued by NCST and NISR
	Issued by local IRB	Issued by COSTECH
	Issued by local IRB	Issued by UNCST

IRB = Institutional Review Board  
LoS = Letter of Support



**Asante**  
**Murakoze**  
**እናመሰግናለን**  
**Mwebale Nyo**  
**Thank you**

Rwanda | Ethiopia | Kenya | Tanzania | Uganda | Netherlands

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