

The media as an effective tool to counter gender inequality

June 10, 2025

Felix Rusche wins the FBK-IRVAPP 2025 award for the best article on the evaluation of public policies

Felix Rusche, PhD student in Economics at the University of Mannheim (Germany), has been awarded the **2025 Best Paper Award for the top scientific article** on public policy evaluation, presented by FBK-IRVAPP.

Rusche's study, Broadcasting Change: India's Community Radio Policy and Women's Empowerment, investigates **how media can serve as a public policy instrument to foster women's empowerment. Specifically, it examines the impact of community radio in India**, following a 2006 policy reform that enabled NGOs and educational institutions to obtain broadcasting licenses to support local development initiatives.

Using original data on the content and reach of over 250 radio stations, the research reveals that women's empowerment has been a consistent focus in community radio programming. The findings are compelling: **access to radio is linked to an average increase of 0.3 years in female education and an 11% higher probability of completing secondary school. Moreover, the study shows a 22% decrease in underage marriages and a 21% increase in women's involvement in family decision-making. These results underscore the powerful role community media can play in addressing gender-based inequalities.**

"The aim of the **FBK-IRVAPP award**," notes **Director Mirco Tonin**, "is to emphasize the importance of rigorous public policy evaluation in understanding societal impact. This year's winning paper is an outstanding example, reminding us of the media's profound influence on people's lives—a power that must be used with great responsibility."

Felix Rusche will present his research at the "**Panel Data for Causal Research Designs**" **summer school, an advanced program on public policy evaluation** for doctoral

students, researchers, and professionals. The event, **organized by FBK-IRVAPP** in collaboration with the **Italian Society of Econometrics (SIdE-IEA)**, will be held **from June 29 to July 4, 2025** at the University Residential Center of Bertinoro (FC).

The FBK-IRVAPP Award – granted by the judging committee composed of **Mirco Tonin, Erich Battistin, and Enrico Rettore** – is awarded annually to the best unpublished study by PhD students or researchers. The winning study is selected for its methodological rigor and innovative approach, with the capacity to advance the debate on a specific public policy.

Last year, the prize was awarded to **Lorenzo Incoronato** for his article “Place-Based Industrial Policies and Local Agglomeration in the Long Run”, while in 2023 it went to **Francesco Filippucci** for the research work conducted with **Salvatore Lattanzio**, “What Do NEETs Need?” The Joint Effect of Active and Passive Labor Market Policies”.

PERMALINK

<https://magazine.fbk.eu/en/news/the-media-as-an-effective-tool-to-counter-gender-inequality/>

RELATED MEDIA

- Call for the best paper in public policy evaluation: <https://irvapp.fbk.eu/3rd-call-for-the-best-paper-in-public-policy-evaluation/>
- Link al paper “Broadcasting Change: India’s Community Radio Policy and Women’s Empowerment”: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5230129
- Pagina personale di Felix Rusche: <https://felixrusche.github.io/>

AUTHORS

- Viviana Lupi