2024 Bio

Francisca García-Cobián Richter is a Research Associate Professor at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences and Associate Director at the Center on Poverty and Community Development, Case Western Reserve University (CWRU). Her bachelor's degree in statistics is from the Universidad Católica del Perú. Her M.S. in statistics (1997) and Ph.D. in agricultural economics (2000) are from Oklahoma State University. Prior to coming to CWRU, she was a Research Economist in Community Development at the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

Francisca's research focuses on the analysis of social interventions and the environments in which they operate. Her work relies on linked administrative data informed by experiential knowledge to analyze the impact of social interventions that address extreme housing instability and child wellbeing.

Francisca developed and currently leads the certificate program in Data Sciences for Social Impact (DSSI) at the Mandel School in collaboration with the school of Engineering. The DSSI program prepares students to navigate and influence this new era of technology and data-driven solutions, empowering them with ethical guidelines and a framework to address discrimination bias. She has co-designed FAIR2 (https://cwru-dsci.org/) with the purpose of integrating community knowledge into data analytics to address discrimination bias in data and modeling.

Francisca is co-chair of **CWRU's Alianza Latina** and founding director of the **Math Corps Super Saturdays at CWRU** (bit.ly/3mFra0y), a community-oriented enrichment and mentoring program where school-aged youth and CWRU students co-create a positive youth development environment to learn math and realize their own greatness. She is a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland's Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council.

Top four primary areas of expertise:
Integrated data system analysis, causal modeling, data science for social impact, community-engaged research.

Why I Teach:
Given the growing use of data technologies in social welfare decision-making, it's crucial to empower students to influence their development for social good. This doesn't require students to become data scientists, but to critically examine the assumptions and biases embedded in the (meta)data and models used to aid decision-making in social welfare, making sure technologies are informed by the experiences of those represented in the data. This class (SASS471) is offered as an elective for all post-baccalaureate students, with the option to attain the Certificate in Data Science for Social Impact, offered in collaboration with the Case School of Engineering.

Why I Chose This Profession:
Growing up in Lima, Peru, I saw grassroots organizations, like women-led soup kitchens, stand bravely against poverty, discrimination, terrorism, and a weak social safety net. This sparked my interest in economics to fight poverty and challenge the narratives that fuel discrimination against the least powerful in seemingly all societies. At the Poverty Center, we work with colleagues across various colleges to leverage integrated administrative data systems (IDS) and community knowledge to inform social programs. Our ethical approach to data analytics aims to address discrimination bias in IDS and incorporate historical, contextual, and community knowledge to promote social good and equity.