

P O L I C Y | I M P A C T S

January 31, 2025

We are pleased to announce this year's recipients of our Early Career Scholars Grant:

The effect of public university scholarships on labor market outcomes in Uganda

Isaac Ahimbisibwe, Baylor University

Lenka Fiala, University of Bergen

Kizito Omala, Makerere University

Wayne Aaron Sandholtz, Nova University of Lisbon

Ahimbisibwe, Fiala, Omala and Sandholtz study the labor market effects of merit-based public university scholarships in Uganda. Using administrative data on scholarship applications and exam scores, combined with tax records, they leverage regression discontinuities at exam score cutoffs for scholarships to identify causal effects on employment and wage outcomes. This work provides the first causal estimates of the returns to university attendance in an African context, which the researchers will use to calculate an MVPF that can inform education policy decisions in resource-constrained settings.

Long-Term Effects of Universal Free School Meals Policies: Evidence from the Community Eligibility Provision

Lexin Cai, Cornell University

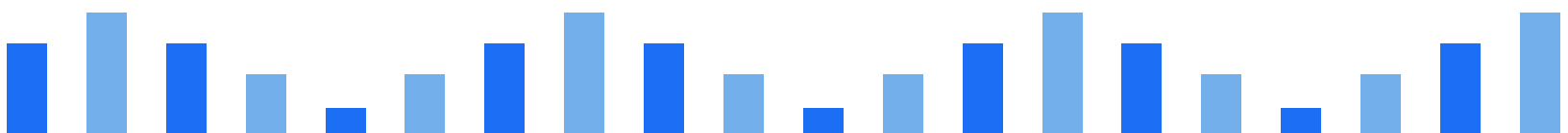
Using longitudinal administrative data from Texas, Cai studies how the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which provides universal free school meals, affects student outcomes compared to traditional means-tested programs. The analysis examines both short-run impacts (test scores, attendance, suspensions) and previously unexplored long-run effects (college completion, employment, earnings) by leveraging variation in CEP adoption timing across schools and birth cohorts. Cai will use these quasi-experimental estimates to calculate an MVPF of school meal programs, helping to inform policy debates on whether school meals should be means-tested or universal.

The Causes and Consequences of UI Take-Up

Casey McQuillan, Princeton University

Brendan Moore, Stanford University

McQuillan and Moore examine unemployment insurance (UI) take-up using two empirical strategies: a regression kink design exploiting a “kink” in the benefit schedule to show how higher benefits affect claims, and a fuzzy regression discontinuity design to study the impacts of UI on workers marginally attached to the labor force. Using administrative data from Washington State, they find that higher benefit levels increase both the number of claimants and claim duration, while extending access to marginal workers improves medium-term earnings and employment stability. They will calculate the MVPFs of raising benefit levels versus expanding access and compare these estimates to other UI policies evaluated in [Hendren and Sprung-Keyser \(2020\)](#).



Equity-Efficiency Tradeoffs in the Design of Agricultural Input Subsidies: Experimental Evidence from Mozambique

Paul Christian, Development Impact, World Bank

Steven Glover, Development Impact, World Bank

Florence Kondylis, Development Impact, World Bank

John Loeser, Development Impact, World Bank

Matteo Ruzzante, Northwestern University

Astrid Zwager, Development Impact, World Bank

The researchers evaluate a progressive agricultural input subsidy in Mozambique using a randomized experiment that varies subsidy rates for different quantities of inputs. Their preliminary findings show that subsidizing smaller quantities improves equity by targeting poorer farmers, while subsidizing larger quantities improves efficiency by increasing input use among more productive farmers. Using their experimental estimates and a structural model, they will calculate MVPFs to quantify the welfare implications of alternative subsidy designs given different weights on equity versus efficiency.

