Schooling and Child Labor: What role for education policies?

Marco Manacorda
Queen Mary University of London
CEP- London School of Economics & UCW

m.manacorda@lse.ac.uk
Educational policies

- Costs of /returns to schooling
  - Supply - Accessibility
  - Repetition policies
  - Quality
Why education policies?

- School attendance easier to monitor

Caution:
- work in combination with school / idleness
- school costly (siblings’)
- CAUSALITY crucial to design policies
Repetition in Primary School and Gross Enrollment Rate in Secondary School

Higher repetition: lower enrolment
Repetition in Primary School and Child Labor

..and higher child labor
Repetition Rates in Primary School and GDP per-capita

Caution: relationship might be spurious
Grade Repetition

- Learning benefits
- Socio-emotional consequences
- Knowledge/discipline
- Improves quality of match
- Deterrent against underperformance
- GE + externalities
Does repetition cause drop-out and lower school attainment?

- Natural experiment (Manacorda, 2008)
  - Uruguay: automatic grade failure if more than 25 days of absence
  - Data follow students for (up to) 5 years
Grade Failure by Number of Missed School Days in Junior High

Discontinuous rise in repetition

[Graph showing the relationship between missed school days and grade failure. The graph highlights a sharp increase in grade failure after 25 missed school days.]
Pupils’ absenteeism and educational attainment (5 years window)

Discontinuous fall in attainment
Pupils’ Absenteeism and stay-on rates (5 years window)

Discontinuous fall in stay-on-rate
The cost of grade repetition

- Grade repetition
  - After 5 years
  - Lowers school attainment by half a year
  - Increases drop out by similar amount (after 5 years)
How to remedy repetition?

- Pre-schooling
  - Early Human Capital investment
  - Socialization to school
  - Enforcement
  - Additional benefits (mother’s work)
Does re-school lower repetition?

- Berlinski, Galiani and Manacorda (2008)
  - Compare siblings’ school trajectories
  - Uruguay: universal pre-school
Preschool attendance and educational attainment (siblings’ comparison)

Diverging educational paths between children who attended preschool compared to siblings who did not
Preschool attendance and stay-on rates (siblings’ comparison)

Diverging stay-on rates between children who attended preschool compared to siblings who did not
Costs and benefits of pre-school

- By age 15
  - +0.79 years of education
  - + 27 p.p. in school

- Benefits-Costs ratio >2.2
School accessibility

- Higher distance
  - Reduces attendance
  - Increases specialization
  - Effect on child labour ambiguous
Distance to school and child labour

- Kondylis and Manacorda (2008)
  - Compare households in same village
  - Rural Tanzania: villagization policy
  - Controls for distance to other infrastructures
## Distance to school and children’s time use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Naif estimates</th>
<th>With controls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>-1.670***</td>
<td>-0.365**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>0.425***</td>
<td>-0.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and school</td>
<td>-1.101***</td>
<td>-0.519***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work only</td>
<td>1.526***</td>
<td>0.249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School only</td>
<td>-0.569***</td>
<td>0.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither school nor work</td>
<td>0.145</td>
<td>0.117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. School</td>
<td>-0.580***</td>
<td>-0.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Work</td>
<td>-0.137</td>
<td>-0.492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Work and school</td>
<td>-0.734***</td>
<td>-0.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Work only</td>
<td>0.597***</td>
<td>-0.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. School only</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>0.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Neither school nor work</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>0.352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Distance to school and children’s time use

- One additional km in distance to school:
  - + 0.3 p.p. school attendance
  - No significant effect on child labor/idleness
- Child labor inelastic
- Effect largely for boys
- External validity?
- Extensive vs. intensive margin
What role for education policies?

- Improvements in accessibility
  - reduce incentives to drop-out
  - and to engage in economic activity
- In poorer countries child labor inelastic
- Labor demand CCT interventions?
- Repetition policies harmful
- Early school exposure viable option