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Undergraduate Studies:

B.A. in Political Science, Economics Minor, Stanford University, with Distinction and Honors, 2010.

Graduate Studies:

Harvard University, 2013 to present
Ph.D. Candidate in Public Policy
Thesis Title: “*Essays in Development Economics*”
Expected Completion Date: May 2019

References:

Professor Asim Khwaja
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Professor Michael Kremer
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Professor Rema Hanna
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Professor Ricardo Hausmann (Teaching Reference)
Harvard University
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(617) 496-3740

Teaching and Research Fields:

Primary fields: Development Economics, Labor Economics
Secondary fields: Education

Teaching Experience:

Fall 2016-2017	“Why are Countries Poor, Volatile and Unequal?” Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), teaching fellow (TF) to Professor Ricardo Hausmann
Spring 2017	“Economic Development,” HKS, TF to Profs. Asim Khwaja and Lant Pritchett
Spring 2017	“Rethinking Financial Inclusion,” Harvard Executive Education Program, Head TF to Professors Asim Khwaja and Rohini Pande
Spring 2016	“Advanced Econometrics,” HKS, TF to Prof. Alberto Abadie
Fall 2015	“Public Finance and Fiscal Policy,” HKS, TF to Prof. Jay Rosengard
Fall 2015	“Introduction to Microeconomics,” Harvard Graduate School of Education, TF to Professor Stephen Taylor

Research Experience and Selected Employment:

1/2018-5/2018 Sergio Fajardo Presidential Campaign, Deputy Director of Policy
6/2015-9/2015 Ministry of Education of Colombia, Consultant
3/2014-12/2014 Research Assistant to Shawn Cole and Eric Werker, Harvard Business School
5/2014-9/2014 Poverty Global Practice, World Bank Group, Consultant
9/2010-7/2013 Center for Global Development, Research Assistant

Professional Activities

Referee Services: Journal of Human Resources

Conferences and Presentations:

Latin American Education Conference, Harvard School of Education, 2017
Evaluations in Education, Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo, Lima, Peru, 2017
Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Policy, University of Texas-Austin, 2012

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:

2018-2019 Harvard Dissertation Completion Fellowship
2017-2018 Taubman Center for State and Local Government Dissertation Fellowship
2013-2019 Harvard GSAS Fellowship
2010 Stanford Firestone Medal of Excellence

Publications:

Books:

Oil-to-Cash: Fighting the Resource Curse through Cash Transfers, with Todd Moss and Caroline Lambert.
Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development, 2015.

Research Papers:

“Can Teaching be Taught?: Experimental Evidence from a Teacher Coaching Program in Peru,”
Job Market Paper. (with Ricardo Montero)

Despite the massive worldwide increase in school enrollment over the past 50 years, many students are not learning. Teacher quality—a key determinant of student achievement—remains low in many countries, and while governments invest heavily on teacher training programs, the evidence on their impact is inconclusive. Development economists, skeptical of teacher training, have instead largely focused on incentive programs. We present novel evidence on the impact of a national teacher coaching program in Peru using an at-scale randomized controlled trial. The program provided teachers in rural primary schools with individualized, continuous coaching on pedagogical practices. Coaching substantially improved learning: students in treatment schools experienced a 0.25-0.38 standard deviation increase in standardized test scores relative to the control group. The gains are observed throughout the test score distribution, with low-performing students benefitting as much as higher performing ones. Using a combination of experimental and non-experimental techniques to account for teacher rotation, we show that the program effects persist for at least one year after the training ends. Interestingly, the impact observed is entirely due to and retained by the trained teacher—schools that lose trained teachers lose the entire initial gains and, when treated teachers move, students benefit from the arrival of the trained teacher as much as students in the original school did. This suggests that the program is building up the human capital of teachers, rather than simply monitoring teacher presence or effort, and that this human capital is portable and persistent. Our results have important policy implications. We find that teacher training programs can indeed be impactful and cost-effective but, given the high level of teacher movement, individual schools may underinvest in teacher training thereby underscoring the need for public subsidies of such training.

“Decentralization in Public Service Provision: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in the Education Sector in Colombia.”

There is a long-standing debate on whether the decentralization of government services improves the quality of their delivery. This paper exploits a natural experiment in Colombia whereby the administration of the education sector was decentralized to municipalities with populations over 100,000. By comparing municipalities above and below this threshold through a regression discontinuity design, I am able to estimate the effect of administrative decentralization on learning outcomes in public schools. I find that for those municipalities close to the cutoff, decentralization has a negative impact on student learning measured through performance on the high school exit exam. In order to understand mechanisms, I undertake a case study of the decentralization process in La Guajira, a region characterized by low institutional capacity that due to mismanagement of its resources recently lost administrative control of its education sector. Through interviews corroborated by administrative data, I find that decentralization impacts education through various channels, including the ability and the incentives to appoint qualified teachers, assign resources, contract with private providers and monitor schools.

“The Effect of a Preschool Expansion on Early Learning Outcomes in Peru.”

To what extent can preschool education improve early learning outcomes and narrow socioeconomic gaps in academic performance in developing countries? This paper exploits within family variation in exposure to preschool due to its gradual expansion across Peru to estimate the effect of two types of preschools on early learning outcomes. I find that having access to a regular preschool improves second grade standardized test scores by 0.09 and 0.1 SD for reading comprehension and mathematics respectively, but find no impact of having access to a community preschool—where a local mother provides the service for students in her community—on test scores. The two preschool modalities are assigned to towns based on the number of preschool-aged students in each town. I exploit discontinuities in this assignment rule to explore the causal impact of being assigned one type of preschool over the other through a regression discontinuity design. I find that for students in towns near the cut-off, being assigned a pre-school with a trained teacher and proper infrastructure has a positive impact on student learning. Finally, I find that having access to preschool is less beneficial for poor students, suggesting that preschool alone is not sufficient for closing socioeconomic gaps in early achievement and complementary measures targeting the poorest students are necessary.

Working Papers:

“No Longer Poor: Ghana’s New Income Status and Implications of Graduation from IDA,” with Todd Moss. *Center for Global Development Working Paper* 300, July 2012.

“Oil for Uganda – or Ugandans? Can Cash Transfers Prevent the Resource Curse?” with Alan Gelb. *Center for Global Development Working Paper* 261, July 2011

Other Research Paper(s) in Progress:

“An Evaluation of an Incentive Payment Scheme for Schools in Colombia,” (with Olga Namen).