

The Paper

- The paper studies an important question: Impact of social protection on child work, wellbeing, and education
 - What kind of impacts did Tanzania's Productive Social Safety Net (PSSN) have on child labour?
 - Did PSSN increase children's educational outcomes such as: school attendance, literacy, and education attainment?
- It integrates well quantitative and qualitative data analysis

Elements

- Paper uses the PSSN evaluation panel for 2 waves: one baseline data from 2015 and one endline data 2017 with a panel of 3,516 children 3-15 years at baseline in 1,307 households
- The study relies on a cluster-randomized evaluation design, assigning villages to one of two study arms: receiving the PSSN (either cash transfers only, or cash transfers combined with public works); and control.
- Methods: Cross-sectional differences between the groups at the endline with using OLS regression, a few education results using DID and qualitative methods

Results

- Overall likelihood of child work did not change BUT types of activities changed
 - 40 % lower likelihood of working for an external employer
 - Cash transfers were used to purchase livestock
 - 24 % rise in livestock herding in household farming and qualitative evidence that this kind of work is perceived safer (less bullying and cheating) and beneficial for the family (business)
 - No statistically significant evidence on lowering participation to hazardous work or experiencing work hazards
- Positive significant effect on school attendance (+5 % likelihood) and literacy (+5 % likelihood) through increased use of CCTs to pay for other school related costs such as uniforms, shoes and textbooks (qualitative evidence)

Comments

1. Randomization
2. Less preferred forms of work decreased
3. Details on schooling
4. Other

1. Randomization

- Reliable randomization and equal levels of the outcome variables at the baseline are the prerequisite for the credibility of many of the results → differences at the endline between the groups are then purely due to the treatment (exogenous “positive shock”)
- In December 2016 there was some [critique](#) posed by government officials who found after doing a verification exercise that there were some irregularities such as over 55,000 beneficiaries who were not eligible
- Was eligibility defined in the exact same way (following the same steps), in control villages than in the treatment villages? Or could there be some differences? Were the village elders informed at the baseline that this will be a control village? The selection did for a step where the village elder verifies if the household is eligible?
- You provided balance analyses, to assure some critics. You could assure these critics even better if you could show that wealth and assets are the same at the baseline, like presenting asset index or animal stock?
- Are the control groups in the same district so that the equivalent control group is interviewed approximately during the same season?

2. Less preferred forms of work decreased

- Could you study the outside jobs more and frame the types of jobs children do to decent and less decent jobs? There exists perhaps more literature on this?
 - In our Tanzania project there some work on Tanzania where in the lowest deciles people tend to diversify for necessity and they move away from these jobs as soon as they have reached a certain level. Khan and Morrissey (2020) find at lowest deciles that women tend to be pushed to diversify rather than pulled to do it and they stop doing that when they reach a certain income level. This same could apply for here, CCT allows them to stop doing these less preferred jobs/types of labour.
 - Dehejia, Gatti, Beegle (2010) Work and Marriage - Child Labor, Marriage Matches, and Bride Prices in Rural Tanzania find that child labour in agricultural activities is associated with better outcomes in terms of family wealth in Tanzania (physical assets, land, and bride prices). Child labour in household chores does not have the same positive connections, especially for girls. So even within the household the work that the child is doing makes a difference.
- Did the CCT protect the households better from shocks that usually push children to work? There is evidence from Tanzania (and elsewhere) that negative shocks (like crop shock) increase child labour.
- Is it that children tend to help the family businesses, in anything they tend to do or was the positive impact only through the increased number of animals? How about urban areas?
- Older children who have already finished all schooling may find working for external employer beneficial?

3. Details on schooling

- Dropout rate remained the same or even decreased. But was it the same for boys and girls?
- Tanzania has also Post Primary Technical Centres (PPTC) in some areas there may not be secondary schools but maybe only PPTCs. Did you include these within the secondary school category?
- School fees were removed in early 2000s (Primary Education Development Program (PEDP)), there exists literature also stating that some costs remained in the form of school uniform, books and such. Maybe you can cite that as well?
- Fine-tuning: As the age range is from 3-15, not all 3-6-year-olds are yet primary school eligible. What was the impact on attendance rates of school-aged children? For example, on average in 2017 in control group the participation rate was 89, so finally this means that treatment villages saw rates up to 94% etc.?
- Participation rates to primary schools are already quite high. Among what aged children was the impact largest? Participation to primary or secondary schools? Or a very uniformly distributed impact to all ages?

4. Other

- Did the intervention improve 14-17-year-olds mental wellbeing?
 - Did you check the Hope-scale and CES-D scale?
- Are there positive impacts girls' education and teenage pregnancies?
- Rather short evaluation period, are there chances to look at the questions on a longer run?



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