Education: Setting the Stage

ABHIJIT V. BANERJEE AND ESTHER DUFLO
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Educating Yaprak

- The story of a Kurdish girl who goes to boarding school after education is made compulsory until grade 8 in Turkey
- Many important themes appear in the movie
The Supply of Education

- No schools in remote villages
- Bad roads and transportation is difficult
- Shortage of well trained teachers
- Large class size

Are these the only constraints?
The demand for education

Would parents send their kids to school without compulsory education? What constrains them?
- The need for child labor
- “no economic ressources”
- “need to get married”
- Is it useful? Do parents know it? What do they expect of education
- What worries them about schools?
Education for what

What are the benefits of education that are touched on in the movie?

- To get a job, higher wage: What do they hope the girl will become? Will everyone become that?
- To improve your life in non-monetary dimensions (“girls will become more socialized”, “knowing how to behave when you go somewhere”, “family planning”)
- Learn things that you can teach others
The government of Turkey is trying a big top down effort to improve educational attainment, particularly of girls, by improving infrastructure and making education compulsory.

This type of supply driven policy has been popular in many countries:
- Free education in many African Countries
- Right to education in India
Success of the supply drive

- Between 1999 and 2006: Enrollment rates in primary school increased
  - from 54 percent to 70 percent in SSA
  - From 75 to 88 percent in East and South Asia
- Worldwide, the number of children of school age who were out of school fell from 103 million in 1999 to 73 million in 2006
But was it all worthwhile?

- There is a clear relationship between education and income per capita of a country.

Source: Angrist and Acemoglu
But the relationship does not hold in difference...

Figure 1: Income vs. Human Capital

Source: Benhabib and Spiegel, 1992
Easterly’s argument

- Top-down investment in education is not useful.
- Rich countries have more education because
  - They needed money to be educated
  - They chose to be educated because they saw that the country was growing
- Internationally-driven investment to education were a waste
Why would supply-driven education not work?

- Poor teacher quality: If people do not care, they won’t put pressure on teacher to deliver:
  - A symptom is lots of teacher absence
- Parents will not want to send their children to these schools if they feel they are not delivering useful skills (like in the movie)
- Children will not study and won’t remember anything much.
Are Supply-Driven education expansion useful?

- There is prior evidence on efforts by countries to increase the level of education from the top-down.
- Indonesia, 1974-1978 – the INPRES program
  - Suharto used oil money to build almost 62,000 schools.
  - Similar features to the Turkey experiment:
    - Was interested in promoting national ideology over local particularity
    - Was entirely pushed by public effort, they built more schools in places where education levels were low initially
The Indonesian Experience

**Education and wages** grew faster in regions that received more schools

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**A1: Experiment of interest: education**

- Number of INPRES schools per capita
- Educ. of young cohort - Educ. of old cohort

**A2: Experiment of interest: log(wages)**

- Number of INPRES schools per capita
- Log(wages) of young cohort - Log(wages) of old cohort

Source: Duflo, 2001
The “returns” to education

- **Putting two and two together:**
  - Schools caused an increase in education
  - Schools caused an increase in wages
  - It has to be that the increase in wages is due to the increase in education:

  This allows us to infer the effect of education on wages:
  Roughly 8% increase in wages for each extra year spent in school:
  Schools are indeed beneficial!
Other benefits of education

- Other studies exploiting the same strategy look at other aspects of education
- Taiwan instituted compulsory schooling in 1968 (for 9 years)
  - This led to an increase in schooling of both boys and girls
  - Infant mortality declined in the regions where education increased fastest due to this reform.
- Nigeria used oil money to build schools:
  - This led to a reduction in fertility in regions where more schools were built.
However...

- It is true that education quality is fairly low in developing countries:
  - High teacher absence
  - High student absence
  - Low achievement:
    - For example ASER survey in India finds that about 35% of children age 7-14 could not read a grade 1 paragraph, and 60% cannot read a grade 2 story in 2005
    - More troublingly, NO PROGRESS since 2005.
    - Similar results in Kenya, Pakistan, Uganda, ....
- What is going on? What is the problem? Is it so hard to teach children to read? And if not why are schools not delivering?