Bocconi



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FOCUS ON

HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTED CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND WELLBEING

The COVID-19 pandemic led to unprecedented disruption of school systems across the globe. Between March 2020 and March 2022, almost every country closed down schools and suspended in-person teaching. In India, primary schools closed for a total of 15 months during the pandemic. Alternative learning activities, typically through the use of digital tools were promoted, but despite these efforts, billions of children worldwide are expected to have experienced some form of education losses as a consequence of school closures (UNICEF).

Question: How did the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated school closure affect schooling outcomes and the psychological well-being of primary school students in India?

Methodology: We rely on a unique dataset that tracks a sample of 200 primary schools and more than 5,000 children in rural Assam, northern India, over four years (from 2018 until 2022).

Results: Two years into the pandemic we find mild drops in enrolment and attendance, but substantial learning losses where students lost the equivalent of roughly 9 months of learnings in mathematics and 10 months of learning in language. We find that children's ability to learn during the pandemic heavily depended on the resources and support they had available at home. Over the pandemic period, children's psychological wellbeing evolved in the opposite direction of learning outcomes, and significantly improved. This is in stark contrast with the strong positive correlation that we observed between these two dimensions across the sample before the pandemic. Finally, our results show that the pandemic completely washed-out children's learning gains induced by an educational program implemented in 2018-2019.

Read the paper *by Andrea Guariso and Martina Björkman Nyqvist*

LATEST NEWS

LEAP Scientific Director **Eliana La Ferrara has been elected Future President of the Econometric Society**. Congratulations!

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LEAP welcomes our new Affiliated Faculty: Giacomo Battiston, Erika Deserrano, Sarah Eichmeier, Miguel Espinosa, Javier Garcia Brazales Sierra, Iris Steenkamp and **new affiliated students!**
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LEAP invites students to submit proposals for research projects on poverty and development issues through the **"LEAP Student Grant"** project. We support interesting ideas and well-designed projects or part of a project (pilot). The grant request can be up to 4000 euros.
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STUDENTS' PROJECTS

KENYA: Mental load - loading women with concerns related to household management and children's well-being - negatively impacts women's but not men's labour productivity on menial tasks. **Watch the video!**

Read more *by Sveva Vitellozzi*

LEAP STUDENTS BLOG

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Field Work? An amazing learning opportunity for aspiring development economists. by Cécile Pierre

A demain, inch'Allah. Fieldwork in a not-so-easy country by Alessandro Palucci

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