JUSTIN SANDEFUR

Scaling-Up Proven Education Interventions in Kenya

Randomized trials of education interventions run by a small NGO in Western Kenya have contributed to a methodological revolution in development economics and helped steer the global education agenda of many aid donors. Are these results informative about the effect of nationwide policies? Skepticism of their external validity stems from at least three concerns: neglected general equilibrium effects, heterogeneous effects across places and contexts, and political or institutional constraints to scaling up. Replication provides a way to address some, but not all of these concerns. We report on an attempt to replicate one successful, small-scale pilot (Duflo et al 2009) – providing contract teachers and school management training – across all eight Kenyan provinces, comparing implementation by an international NGO versus the Kenyan Ministry of Education. Preliminary results suggest that geographic heterogeneity does not undermine external validity in this case, but institutional capacity is a serious constraint: impacts are significantly higher under NGO rather than Ministry implementation. We conclude by discussing remaining concerns about general equilibrium effects that cannot be addressed merely through replication.