

# KATHERINA THOMAS

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## PHD CANDIDATE

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## EDUCATION

PHD IN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS, 2019 - present

*Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) and Barcelona School of Economics (BSE), Spain*

Thesis: Essays on Child Development | expected graduation: Summer 2023

VISITING STUDENT, *University of Minnesota, USA*, Spring 2022

JOINT MASTER IN MODELS & METHODS OF QUANTITATIVE ECONOMICS, 2019

*Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain,*

*Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italy, Universität Bielefeld, Germany*

BACHELOR IN ECONOMICS, 2017

*Universität Bayreuth, Germany*

EXCHANGE SEMESTER, *University of New South Wales, Australia*, Fall 2015

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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

*Applied Micro, Development economics, Labor economics*

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## RESEARCH

### Job Market Paper

How to close the skill gap? Parental background and children's skill development in Indonesia

### Work in Progress

Income and the Demand for Food

*with Marc F. Bellemare and Eeshani Kandpal*

Food Prices, Program Saturation and Cash Transfers

*with Jed Friedman, Eeshani Kandpal and Patrick Premand*

Early life shocks and human capital: skill development among Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

*with Jacek Barszczewski*

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## SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

2022	NEUDC Conference (Yale University, presenter and discussant), Macro Micro Workshop (University of Minnesota), Essex-Barcelona Labor Workshop, ENTER jamboree (UAB), Inequality Workshop (University of Minnesota), Applied Seminar (UAB), Internal Seminar (IAE (CSIC), PhD-Economics Virtual Seminar (PhD-EVS)) (presenter)
2021	BSE PhD jamboree (presenter and discussant), Applied Seminar (UAB) (presenter), ENTER jamboree (discussant), PhD school SAEe (attendee)
2020	Applied Seminar (UAB) (presenter)

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## TEACHING

2021, 2020    Master Projects Course (tutorial on thesis writing), Teaching assistant (BSE)  
2021           Structural Empirical Methods for Labor Economics, Teaching assistant (UAB)

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## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT

2021-22        THE WORLD BANK  
Short-term consultant, Development Research Group, remotely

2019-22        UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA, INSTITUT D'ANÀLISI ECONÒMICA (IAE (CSIC))  
Research assistant, Barcelona, Spain  
                to Prof. Joan Llull (2022, 2019-20)  
                to Prof. Matthew Ellman (2021)  
                to Prof. Hannes Mueller (2020)

2020-21        THE ECONOMIC JOURNAL (ROYAL ECONOMIC SOCIETY)  
Replication checks, remotely

2018, 2017,    BASF SE  
2016           Working student/intern, Trade and Bank Risk Management, Ludwigshafen, Germany

2017           GERMAN FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE  
Intern, Colombo, Sri Lanka

2016           MISEREOR E.V. (ORGANISATION FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION)  
Intern, Aachen, Germany

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## HONORS & AWARDS

2020-23        4-year FPI Predoctoral Fellowship, Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation  
2017-19        QEM Consortium scholarship, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

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## SKILLS

SOFTWARE    STATA, Python, Latex, Github

LANGUAGES   German (native), English (proficient), French, Spanish (intermediate), Polish (beginner)

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## SERVICE

2019-present   Volunteer, Fundació Gavina (organization for disadvantaged children), Barcelona, Spain

2020-22        Co-founder and co-organizer, Econisers (initiative for PhD candidates), Barcelona, Spain

2017            Volunteer, Ferrando Children's Home, Mysore, India

2013-17        Mentor and volunteer, VUB e.V. (student organization), Bayreuth, Germany

2015-16        Student representative for Economics, Universität Bayreuth, Bayreuth, Germany

2014-15        Volunteer, Bunt statt Braun e.V. (refugee support organization), Bayreuth, Germany

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## REFERENCES

JOAN LLULL (Advisor)  
UAB, MOVE, BSE  
✉ joan.llull@movebarcelona.eu

HANNES MUELLER  
IAE (CSIC), MOVE, BSE, CEPR  
✉ hannes.mueller@iae.csic.es

EESHANI KANDPAL  
The World Bank (Development Research Group)  
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## ABSTRACTS

How to close the skill gap? Parental background and children's skill development in Indonesia  
*Job Market Paper*

Preexisting inequalities in socioeconomic status can drive differences in children's cognitive skill development and parents' reactions to child development policies influencing policy effectiveness. To analyze the role of parental background and investments (nutrition diversity and schooling expenditure) in this process, I estimate a dynamic structural model using data from Indonesia. I find two main factors contribute to the adult skill gap: household income and parental education, which influences the productivity of investments. Using the model, I simulate three policies: unconditional cash transfers, nutrition, and schooling price subsidies. To compare their long-run effects on adult skills, I account for parents adjusting their investment behavior in response to policies. Given the same cost, a) subsidizing food prices is more effective than subsidizing schooling expenditure, and b) both are more effective than cash transfers. As I find nutrition and schooling to be complements, a price decrease incentivizes parents to increase both inputs. With cash transfers, parents also increase investments but increase consumption relatively more as price incentives do not change. Nutrition subsidies reduce inequality most effectively, as parents with lower education react stronger to food price changes and, consequently, increase child investments more than parents with higher education. They do so as they spend a larger share of investments on nutrition. Further, nutrition subsidies implemented alone are more cost-effective than any combination of the three policies.

Income and the Demand for Food  
*with Marc F. Bellemare and Eeshani Kandpal*

While microeconomic theory makes unambiguous predictions about the effects of income changes on the demand for specific types of food, empirical estimates of these effects typically suffer from important shortcomings having to do with internal validity, external validity, or both. On the internal validity front, most estimates of the effect of a change in income on the demand for food rely on identification assumptions that can be hard to defend. On the external validity front, those same estimates usually focus on a limited number of commodities or on a single, specific context. Using aggregate data from five randomized controlled trials across three continents and four countries each designed to study the impact of cash transfers, we take an aggregate look at the impact of exogenous income changes on food expenditures, which we use as a proxy for food demand. First, we find that a change in income causes expenditures to increase across all food categories. Second, we find empirical support for Bennett's Law, the empirical regularity whereby as incomes increase, consumers first substitute fine grains for coarse grains, and then protein for carbohydrates. Overall, expenditures on protein are most responsive to an exogenous change in income, followed by expenditures on staples. Finally, across all categories we consider, food seems to be a necessity.