

KATHERINA THOMAS

Postdoctoral Researcher | University of Barcelona

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ABOUT ME

Passionate about evidence-based policy and global development, I translate academic research into policy recommendations and excel in collaboratively creating solutions for development challenges. With a PhD in Economics and first-hand project management experience, I specialize in applying quantitative methods to address inequalities in child development. My proactive strategy led to the successful planning and implementation of a large parenting intervention and its impact evaluation. Committed to effective communication, I foster collaborative relationships between international teams and implementation partners and mentor students. Combining adaptive, empathic, and clear communication with critical thinking and problem-solving skills, I guide interdisciplinary teams through challenging project phases and enhance client engagement.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA | POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER

since 09/2023

- **Managing the implementation of a context-relevant parenting intervention** involving 2,300 families in Ghana: coordination and development of theory of change, two pilot studies, survey questionnaires, survey experiment, pre-analysis plans, power calculations, data cleaning and analysis, impact evaluation and monitoring implementation process.
- **Supervising fieldwork in Ghana**, actively encouraging practitioner feedback, coordinating with the research team, improving survey design and addressing practical challenges.
- **Stepping up to lead the project** during principal investigators' maternity leaves, ensuring smooth project continuation and alignment with strategic objectives.
- **Mentoring a master student and supervising research assistant team** in executing data analyses tailored to project needs.
- **Leading and restructuring team meetings**, fostering a collaborative environment, and facilitating interactions between partners and researchers, enhancing process efficiency.
- **Executing research on education and child development:**
 - Development of innovative lab-in-the-field experiment to inform design of parenting training programs, including co-authoring of successful grant proposal.
 - Engagement with potential collaborators resulting in research project investigating the foundations of skill formation and estimating long-term effects of pre-school education.
- **Drafting papers, presenting results at international conferences** (one paper submitted)

BARCELONA SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS | PHD RESEARCHER

09/2019-06/2023

- **Independently developing PhD thesis on how to reduce inequalities in child development with policies** as subsidies, cash transfers and parenting training:
 - Quantitative data analysis: data visualization and cleaning, structural modeling, panel data estimation, impact evaluation pooling data across countries and policy simulations.
 - Deepening expertise in child development focusing on education, parenting and nutrition.
 - Initiating and managing multiple collaborative research projects.
- **Guiding and teaching graduate students** as Teaching Assistant, providing feedback fostering an engaging learning environment, designing teaching materials and problem sets.
- **Coordinating research group meetings**, improving meeting quality and outcomes by identifying time management issues and enhancing meeting structures with team input.
- **Disseminating research findings** by presenting at international conferences.
- **Supporting four different research projects** as Research Assistant, integrating into new projects rapidly and effectively executing data preparation, visualization and analysis.

- THE WORLD BANK | SHORT-TERM CONSULTANT, RESEARCH DEPARTMENT 07/2021-06/2022
- **Identifying data sources, executing data analysis and visualizing results**, culminating in two independent research projects on the impact of cash transfer programs on households' nutrition choices and food prices across Asia, Latin America, and Africa.
- THE ECONOMIC JOURNAL | ASSISTANT TO DATA EDITOR 01/2020-12/2021
- **Assuring quality of conditionally accepted articles** by performing replication checks.
- BASF SE | WORKING STUDENT, TRADE AND BANK RISK MANAGEMENT 08/2016-08/2018
- **Developing new country risk evaluation concept** ensuring project objectives, analysis of global financial sector developments, preparation of presentations for senior management.
- GERMAN FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE IN COLOMBO (SRI LANKA) | INTERN 07/2017-09/2017
- **Drafting economic and political reports**, participating in and documenting diplomatic meetings, gaining insights into international relations.
- MISEREOR | INTERN 02/2016-04/2016
- **Preparing and drafting policy briefs**, conducting detailed research on pastoralism-focused development programs and analyzing impacts on communities.

EDUCATION

- Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona School of Economics** 2019-2023
PhD in Economic Analysis
University of Minnesota (Visiting student, Spring 2022)
- Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Universität Bielefeld** 2017-2019
Joint Master in Models & Methods of Quantitative Economics
- Universität Bayreuth** 2013-2017
Bachelor in Economics
University of New South Wales (Exchange student, Fall 2015)

GRANTS AND AWARDS

- Co-Principal Investigator, Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, Proyectos de Generación de Conocimiento (~ EUR 116.000) 2024
- 4-year FPI Grant, Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation 2020-2023
- QEM Consortium scholarship, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne 2017-2019

SKILLS

- Languages:** German (native), English (fluent), French (proficient), Spanish (advanced), Polish (basic)
- Software:** STATA, LaTeX, MS Office (all proficient), Python (intermediate), R, Git (both basic)

VOLUNTEERING

- CorrelAid - Data4Good, Project coordination team** since 03/2024
Connecting volunteers to NPOs: identifying organizational needs, managing expectations, drafting application calls, selecting suitable volunteers and organizing project kick-off meetings.
- Econisers, Co-founder and Co-organizer** 07/2020-09/2022
Initiating and organizing webinar series for PhD candidates on research and career advice to overcome entry barriers into the profession.
- Fundació Gavina** 11/2019-07/2022
Providing childcare for NGO in Barcelona supporting disadvantaged children.
- Ferrando Children's Home** 06/2018-07/2018
Supervising children and designing and teaching English classes in Mysore, India.
- Volkswirtschaft an der Universität Bayreuth (VUB) e.V.** 10/2013-02/2017
Mentoring first-year students, organizing events to create welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Universität Bayreuth** 01/2015-01/2016
Student representative for Economics degree program.