

DEBORAH NAKKUNGU

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Education

Cornell University, NY: Ph.D. in Public Policy, Economics	202408 – Present
CUNY Hunter College, NY: M.A. in Economics	202108 – 202405
Makerere University, Uganda: B.A. in Economics	201708 – 202105

Fields Development Economics, Health Economics, Macro Development, and Policy

Coursework

1st year Economics Ph.D.:
Microeconomic Theory I, II, & III, Macroeconomics I, & II, Econometrics I, & II, and
Intermediate Math for Economics
Ph.D. Economics Qualification Exams (Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Econometrics): **Passed**

Work in Progress

Impact of exposure to coal plants on child health

Abstract: Air pollution in developing nations presents a significant health threat; India's reliance on coal to meet increasing electricity demands and the non-compliance of coal plants with emission regulations worsen air pollution, resulting in considerable health risks. In this paper, I estimate the effect of exposure to coal plants on birth weight using data from the 2019-21 Demographic Health Survey (DHS) and the Central Electricity Authority's data on coal plants in India. A linear regression controls for confounding factors, including village and birth cohort effects, as well as birth and household variables. I find that an additional gigawatt (GW) increase in coal capacity, an additional terawatt-hour (TWh) increase in coal generation units, and each additional kilogram of CO₂ emissions per gigawatt-hour (kgCO₂/GWh) decrease birth weight by 51.1g, 10.5g, and 11.3g respectively. I also estimate that infants born to mothers residing within a 50km proximity to average-sized coal plants are, on average, 40g smaller than their counterparts in non-coal-exposed villages.

Research	Research Assistant for Professor Chris Barrett, Cornell University (CIDER)	Fall 2025 –
	Research Assistant for Professor Jessica Van Parys, CUNY Hunter College	Spring 2022
	Research Assistant Research World International, Uganda	Jul 2020–Jun 2021)
	Research Assistant Policy Analysis & Development Research Institute, Uganda	Dec 2019–Jun 2020)

Work	Project Analyst, Office of The President, CUNY Hunter College	Fall 2023–Summer 2024
	Trainee Economic Research Department, Bank of Uganda	Jun 2019

Teaching

Teaching Assistantships		
PUBPOL 2100: Intro to Statistics, Cornell University (Prof. Fikri Pitsuwan)		Spring 2026
PUBPOL 3280: Fundamentals of Population Health, Cornell University (DR. Julie Carmalt)	Fall 2025	
Eco 727: Data Analytics & Research Methods, CUNY Hunter College (Prof. Kenneth McLaughlin)		
Winter 2024		
ECO 722: Nonlinear Econometrics, CUNY Hunter College (Prof. Partha Deb)		Spring 2023
ECO 100: Intro Microeconomics, CUNY Hunter College (Prof. Matthew Baker)		Fall 2022

Awards, Fellowships, Grants & Scholarships

Travel Grant: Cornell Brooks, NEUDC Conference (\$500),	Nov 2025
Travel Grant: Cornell Brooks, ASHEcon Conference (\$500),	June 2025
Cornell University, Graduate School Fellowship \$1,300	Apr 2025
Brooks School Fellowship, Cornell University	2024 – 2030
CUNY Hunter College, Magna Cum Laude	Jun 2024
Princeton University Academic Scholarship \$25,000	Jun 2021
Makerere University, Honors Award, Economics Class of 2021	
Government of Uganda, National Merit Academic Scholarship	2017 – 2020

Academic Service

Secretary: Graduate Students in Public Policy (GSPP)

First Year Ph.D. Mentor

Fall 2025– Present

Fall 2025– Spring 2025

Skills

Software: Stata, R, LaTeX, Markdown, MS Office

Data Analysis: Cleaning, descriptive statistics, visualization

Regression: OLS, Logit/Probit, GLM, Panel Data, IV, Diff-in-Diff, Propensity Score Matching

Languages: English, Luganda, Swahili (Intermediate)

References

Nicholas Sanders – njsanders@cornell.edu

Partha Deb – partha.deb@hunter.cuny.edu

Karna Basu – karna.basu@hunter.cuny.edu