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Fields Development Economics

Education **University of California, Santa Cruz, U.S.A.**
 Ph.D. in Economics, Department of Economics 2022 (expected)
 M.A. in Economics, Department of Economics 2017

Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea
 Master of Global Economy & Strategy, Graduate School of International Studies 2016
 B.A. in Economics, Underwood International College 2010

Job Market Paper **“Reducing Intimate Partner Violence: Evidence from a Multifaceted Female Empowerment Program in Urban Liberia”** (with Naresh Kumar).

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a global public health challenge, but evaluating interventions to reduce IPV is challenging because the underlying factors of IPV are so intertwined that public health professionals recommended it be targeted in multiple directions. This paper evaluates a randomized controlled trial of a multifaceted female empowerment program in Monrovia, Liberia, where the baseline IPV prevalence is particularly high. The program intervention includes intensive psychosocial therapy and vocational skills training throughout a full year. About 12 months after program completion, we find the program significantly reduced the proportion of women who experienced emotional, physical, and sexual IPV by 10-26 percentage points (from control bases of 24-62 percent). While there are multiple pathways through which IPV could be impacted, one channel is that the business training was highly effective: labor supply increased by 37 percent and expenditure by 49 percent. One focus of the program is psychological empowerment, and we find positive but statistically insignificant effects on distress and happiness indices. We also find improvements in social norms around IPV: perceived justifiability of IPV reduced by 0.3 standard deviations.

Working Papers **“Did COVID-19 Market Disruptions Disrupt Food Security? Evidence from Households in Rural Liberia and Malawi”** (with Shilpa Aggarwal, Dahyeon Jeong, Naresh Kumar, Jonathan Robinson, and Alan Spearot). Revise and Resubmit at *Food Policy*.

We use data collected from panel phone surveys to quantify the effect of market disruptions due to the COVID-19 lockdowns on food security of households in rural Liberia and Malawi. We estimate effects using two distinct empirical approaches: (a) an event study around the date of the lockdowns (March to July 2020), and (b) a difference-in-differences analysis comparing the lockdown period in 2020 to the same months in 2021, which helps us control for any seasonal effects. In both countries, market activity was severely disrupted and we observe declines in expenditures. However, we find no evidence of declines in food security.

“Private but Misunderstood? Evidence on Measuring Intimate Partner Violence via Self-Interviewing in Rural Liberia and Malawi” (with Shilpa Aggarwal, Dahyeon Jeong, Naresh Kumar, Jonathan Robinson, and Alan Spearot).

Measuring intimate partner violence (IPV) is challenging because women may underreport. We conduct a measurement experiment in rural Liberia and Malawi in which women were asked IPV questions via either self-interviewing (SI) or face-to-face interviewing (FTFI). We find that many do not understand the module: about a third incorrectly answer basic screening questions. Even among those who do “pass” screening, placebo effects of SI on innocuous questions persist. Because the probability of responding “yes” to any specific IPV question is less than 50%, such misunderstanding will tend to increase IPV reporting—especially since IPV is typically reported as an index (reporting yes to at least one question). In Malawi, we find that SI dramatically increases reported IPV (the incidence of any type of IPV increases by 12-14 percentage points, on a base of 21%); in Liberia, we find a much more modest increase of 1-6 percentage points (insignificant) on a base of 41%. Our results suggest researchers should be cautious in using SI, since it may spuriously increase reported IPV rates.

“Exhaustive or Exhausting? Evidence on Respondent Fatigue in Long Surveys” (with Shilpa Aggarwal, Dahyeon Jeong, Naresh Kumar, Jonathan Robinson, and Alan Spearot).

Living standards measurement surveys require the sustained attention of a respondent for several hours. We quantify survey fatigue in a measurement experiment in rural Liberia and Malawi where we randomized the order in which various questions appeared in a 2-3 hour-long in-person baseline and endline surveys. The surveys were conducted as part of an evaluation of cash transfers. For an extra 30 minutes of survey time, we find that respondents are about 5-10% more likely to skip a question. Because they skip more questions, the total monetary value of aggregated categories such as assets or expenditures decline. This effect is quite large for some categories: for example, an extra 30 minutes lowers food expenditures by 12.5% and the value of transfers received by 22% and the value of transfers given by 39%. This decrease implies that cash treatment effects will be attenuated for outcomes measured later in the survey, and this is what we find.

“The Impact of Digital Credit in Developing Economies: A Review of Recent Evidence” (with Joshua Blumenstock and Jonathan Robinson).

In recent years, a new generation of “digital credit” products have transformed the consumer lending landscape in many low- and middle-income countries. Offering short-term, high-interest loans via mobile phones or other digital platform, these products have become wildly popular among otherwise unbanked populations. This article reviews the small but emerging evidence on the welfare impacts of digital credit. These studies document very high rates of takeup – well in excess of traditional microcredit – despite the fact that customers often do not understand the terms of their loans. Overall, there is little evidence that access to credit has consistent positive impacts on borrower welfare, though two impact evaluations document positive effects on resilience and subjective well-being, respectively. No study documents statistically significant negative impacts of digital credit.

Works in Progress

“The Dynamic Effects of Cash Transfers: Evidence from High Frequency Surveys in Rural Liberia and Malawi” (with Shilpa Aggarwal, Jenny Aker, Dahyeon Jeong, Naresh Kumar, Jonathan Robinson, and Alan Spearot).

We evaluate an unconditional cash transfer program implemented by the NGO GiveDirectly. We work in 600 rural villages in Liberia and Malawi, and 300 villages receive transfers of

\$250-750 per household. We investigate cash effects on a host of household welfare outcomes such as food security, expenditure, wealth, psychosocial wellbeing and intimate partner violence. While data collection for endline is ongoing, our preliminary results show significant effects on most of our pre-specified primary outcomes (about 18 months after households received their first transfers). We also examine the dynamic effects of cash transfers via monthly phone surveys which started before the first transfers and continued for more than two years. We find that the effect of cash on household expenditure dissipates quickly (non-significant at endline). We also find that the effect on food security is diminishing over time, though the effects are still significant at endline.

“Going the Extra Mile: Remoteness, Input Adoption, and the Role of Subsidies” (with Shilpa Aggarwal, Dahyeon Jeong, Naresh Kumar, Jonathan Robinson, and Alan Spearot).

Farmers in sub-Saharan Africa typically use much less than the recommended amounts of productivity-enhancing inputs like fertilizer, and this usage (and productivity) gap is even greater for those located in remote areas. We study the effect of agricultural input subsidies on input usage, and on the input usage-remoteness gradient using a unique policy experiment: the randomization of the Malawi Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP). The subsidy is worth approximately 75% of the cost of inputs (roughly \$50), but requires farmers to travel to input retailers to redeem the coupon, such that the delivered price of subsidized inputs is increasing with remoteness. We find that the subsidy increased fertilizer use on average, but only modestly (due to high levels of input usage in the control group), and we find no lasting impact of the program. We find no remoteness gradient in take-up of subsidized fertilizer—in this context, travel costs have no deterring effect on subsidy take-up, a result which may be attributable to the size of the subsidy. While remoteness is associated with a decline in fertilizer usage for non-beneficiaries, the gap is completely eliminated for beneficiaries. Our results suggest that subsidy programs like FISP may have a role to play in narrowing spatial inequities in developing countries.

“Remoteness and Input Market Access in Rural Malawi” (with Shilpa Aggarwal, Dahyeon Jeong, Rolly Kapoor, Naresh Kumar, Jonathan Robinson, and Alan Spearot).

“Understanding Factors for Adoption of Modern Contraceptives: An Experiment with Private-sector Health Providers in Liberia” (with Rolly Kapoor and Naresh Kumar)

“Property Tax Compliance under Low Fiscal Capacity: An Experiment with the Liberia Revenue Authority” (with Oyebola Okunogbe)

Grants & Awards	J-PAL Crime and Violence Initiative (CVI) Pilot RCT Grant, \$50,000	2019
	IPA Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Initiative Grant, \$50,000	2019
	UC Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC)	
	Dissertation Fellowship, \$25,000	2019-2020
	UCSC Blum Scholar Research Grant, \$2,000	2019
	UCSC Economics Department Research Grant, \$12,300	2019, 2020
	J-PAL Governance Initiative (GI) Proposal Development Grant, \$4,000	2019
	UCSC Teaching Assistant Award for Excellence in Teaching	2018
	UCSC Economics Department Fellowship, \$10,000	2016-2017
	UCSC Regents Fellowship, \$12,000	2016-2017
	Yonsei GSIS Scholarship, \$17,000	2014-2016
	Keio Honors Scholarship, \$2,000	2008

	Yonsei UIC Full-tuition Scholarship, \$50,000	2006-2010
Presentations	North East Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC) Conference	2021
	IPA-Northwestern GPRL Methods and Measurement Conference	2021
	UC Berkeley Public Health Workshop	2021
	IPA RECOVR Webinar Series	2020
	UC Berkeley Development Lunch	2019
	UCSC Micro Workshop	2018-2021
Research Assistantship	Oyebola Okunogbe (World Bank)	2020
	Jonathan Robinson (UCSC), Shilpa Aggarwal (ISB), and Valentina Brailovskaya (IDinsight)	2017
	Jeong Yeon Lee (Yonsei)	2014-2016
	Donghun Kim (Yonsei)	2015
	Donghun Kim (Yonsei) and Youngse Kim (Yonsei)	2014-2015
Teaching Assistantship	UC Santa Cruz:	
	ECON 104: The Role of Statistics in Economics	
	· Carlos E. Dobkin	Winter 2018, Spring 2018
	ECON 113: Introduction to Econometrics	
	· Carlos E. Dobkin	Spring 2017
	· Jessie Q. Li	Fall 2017
	ECON 120: Development Economics	
	· Jonathan M. Robinson	Fall 2020
	ECON 201: Applications in Microeconomics (Masters)	
	· Justin G. Marion	Spring 2019, Spring 2020
	ECON 216: Applied Econometric Analysis I (Masters)	
	· George Bulman	Fall 2021
	ECON 217: Applied Econometric Analysis II (Masters)	
	· Jessie Q. Li	Winter 2021
	Yonsei University:	
	International Economics	
	· Jeong Yeon Lee	Fall 2014, Fall 2015
	Intro. to International Economics (Masters)	
	· Jeong Yeon Lee	Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Fall 2015
	International Finance (Masters)	
	· Jeong Yeon Lee	Spring 2015
Non-academic Experience	Intern, The Boston Consulting Group, Seoul, Korea	2013
	Sergeant, Republic of Korea Army, Changwon, Korea	2011-2013
	Intern, Korea Development Institute, Seoul, Korea	2009
Skills	Computer: Stata, Python, R, MATLAB, SurveyCTO, EViews, L ^A T _E X	
	Language: English (fluent), Korean (native), Mandarin (intermediate)	
Citizenship	Republic of Korea	