

# 1 Introduction

Across the world, vulnerable populations rely on governments for access to basic public services such as education. Over the past two decades, enrollment rates in public education have improved dramatically.<sup>1</sup> Improvements in access have not been matched, for many, with a better quality of education. From a global perspective, educational quality indicators such as the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) score have broadly stagnated.<sup>2</sup>

How can we improve the quality of education? In large part, the answers are domestic. While each country faces a particular set of challenges, broad institutional reforms in the developing world make their cases comparable. Decentralization has delegated responsibility for public education to subnational governments, as well as induced variation in the quality of education along subnational lines [Falleti, 2010, Arretche, 1996]. Understanding how this level of government manages these services, and in particular how local actors strategically shape them can help find answers to that question. [Gulzar and Pasquale, 2017, Min, 2015].

## References

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<sup>1</sup>See Haggard and Kaufman [2008], Kaufman and Segura-Ubiergo [2001].

<sup>2</sup>For coverage, see [here](<https://www.economist.com/international/2019/12/05/pisa-results-can-lead-policymakers-astray>).

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