

Early Childhood Development: Fostering Economic Inclusion Right from the Start

Discussion: EBRD Workshop

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- The book is a great example of research to policy
 - ▶ Careful about framing, challenges of obtaining robust evidence, measurement
 - ▶ Demonstrate how to use findings from best research available for forming specific policy recommendations
- Show how to do what we all agree makes so much sense in theory but often struggle with in practice

In this discussion

Pick up on two key issues addressed in the book and try to push them a little bit further

- ① Understanding long-run effects of ECD interventions
- ② Quality of Early Childhood Care and schooling provision

1. Long-run perspective

- In the book discuss:
 - ▶ Evolution of SES gaps
 - ▶ Evidence on long-run effects of ECD interventions
- I want to hone in on evidence of fade-out of intervention effects observed repeatedly in developed and developing countries

- Evidence on fade-out: Sometimes effects re-appear (e.g. Jamaica study), sometimes not (Bailey et al, 2015).
- Plausible explanations for fade-out
- Lacking sufficiently in-depth understanding of developmental trajectories of different skills throughout the whole of childhood

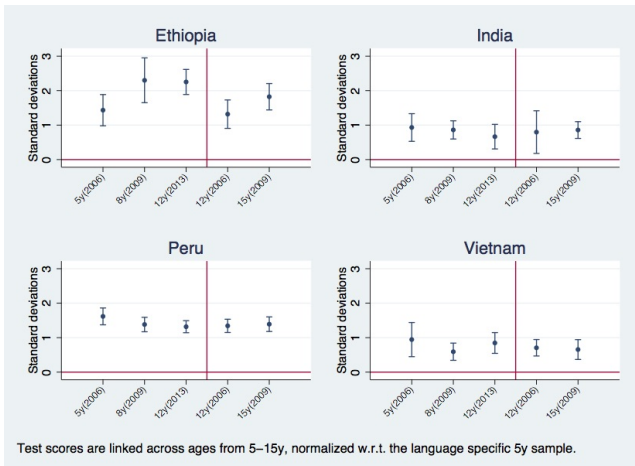
→Crucial question for the design of effective childhood interventions that can have lasting impacts on long-run outcomes.

Digging a bit deeper with Young Lives data

Use a 15 year 4 country panel data-set to dig a bit deeper and

- ① Look at what happens to the mean socio-economic gap in PPVT after the age of 5, until 15
- ② Look at what would happen if we close the gap by age 5

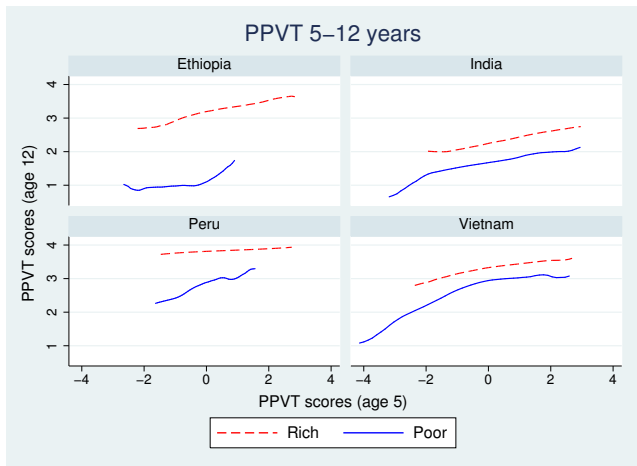
Mean SES gaps ages 5-15



What do we see?

- At first read looks like gaps from early childhood persist through childhood →we should work towards closing gaps in early childhood
- So what happens if we do?
 - ▶ Use panel data to see what happens if we close the gap by age 5 - compare age 12 PPVT scores of children from top and bottom wealth quartiles with the same PPVT score at age 5
 - ▶ In all 4 countries see that by age 12 gaps open up again - poorer children who were scoring the same on PPVT as richer at age 5, score btw 0.5 (Vietnam) and 2 (Ethiopia) sd's lower by age 12.
 - ▶ Also see this ages 12-15

Divergence



- I read these results as saying:
 - ▶ Gaps in learning in later childhood and adolescence are not just the result of persistence of deficits from early childhood - there is fresh divergence throughout childhood.
 - ▶ Need to think about intervention dynamically over the course of childhood
- Need to do a lot more work on understanding:
 - ▶ How skills develop over the whole of childhood and adolescence?
 - ▶ How developmental trajectories might differ for different skills?
 - ▶ What are the most important dimensions of development for key adult outcomes (re-emergence of effects after fade-out)?

2. Improving quality: Fostering teacher-student interaction and child-led learning

- Book emphasizes the issue of quality of child-care and early schooling provision.
 - ▶ We already have evidence on the detrimental effects of poor schooling on inequality
 - ▶ Quality at earlier ages is even more important
- Hones in on exciting new findings on importance of Responsive Teaching - Teaching Through Interactions framework (Hamre & Pianta, 2007)
- Might present challenges in developing country contexts (more onus on the teacher, hard to monitor and implement in a consistent way, dependent on availability of well-trained, motivated teachers) → risk of further divergence in school quality?

Is there another way?

- Vietnam in an interesting (maybe) counter example:
 - ▶ Few studies of teaching practices, but uses very traditional teacher-led methods combined with a rigid centrally designed curriculum, teacher training and even (at times) teacher allocation (based on Soviet school system)

Table: PISA 2012 (Math)

	GDP per capita (current \$)	Mean PISA score	Rank	% of students failing to reach minimum level of proficiency
Vietnam	1,755	511	17	14
Chile	15,253	423	51	52
Peru	6,388	368	65	75
Mexico	9,703	413	53	55
Brazil	11,922	391	58	67
Colombia	7,885	376	62	74
Argentina	14,357	388	59	67

What can we learn from Vietnam?

- They definitely haven't "cracked it" (critical thinking, inequality)
- But, also have some impressive achievements using traditional, rigid teaching methodologies and a highly centralised system of curriculum development, teacher training etc.
- How? →Worth investing in understanding different success stories as one size might not fit all