"Women's Empowerment in Action: Evidence from a Randomized Control Trial in Africa"

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Motivation and research question

- Women empowerment (economic, control over their body) is slow in many developing countries

- Equilibrium trap:
  - Low human capital, restricted labor market access, limited control over body, dependence on men
  - Reinforcement loop

- Research question:
  - Is it possible to empower women and put them on better trajectory through a human capital accumulation intervention?

Summary of the paper

- Evaluate a program simultaneously offering adolescent girls in Uganda:
    1. "hard" vocational skills--to be able to earn money on their own
    2. "soft" life skills--build knowledge enabling girls to make informed choices (sex, reproduction, marriage)

- Outcomes:
    1. Economic empowerment
        - Related to employment, earnings, entrepreneurial ability
    2. Control over their body
        - Children, marriage, unwilling sex, pregnancy and HIV knowledge, contraceptives use
    3. Aspirations
        - Suitable age at marriage for man/woman, preferred no. children, preferred age for sons'/daughters' marriage

Empirical approach

- Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)

- Randomize the creation of *ELA clubs*: 100 communities in Uganda randomly selected to host a club, 50 communities as controls
  - Club participation is voluntary
  - Eligibility based on gender and age (teenage girls)

- Sample teenage girls across treatment and control communities
  - Baseline (before), follow-up (2 years after), endline (4 years after)

- *Intention-to-Treat effect:*
  - Estimate the effect of having a club in the community, not the effect of attending the courses

Data

- Census of adolescent girls in 150 evaluation communities carried out at baseline

- From census, 5,966 girls were surveyed at baseline
  - Track respondents (as best as possible) at follow-up and baseline

- Unbalanced panel: 5,966 units and 3 periods

- Dataset:
  - `Uganda ELA Panel wide.dta`
  - Panel in wide format: one observation per girl