

EDUCATION

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EFP Takeaways

Can Camp Get You Into a Better Secondary School? A Field Experiment of Targeted Instruction in Kenya

Background

Receiving a secondary education can be life-changing for young people around the world. However, in many low- and middle-income countries, entry into secondary school is still largely determined by performance on a high-stakes exam taken at the end of primary school. Beth E. Schueler and Daniel Rodriguez-Segura examine the causal effect of the “symposia” program—week-long, sleep-away camps for Kenyan students preparing for an upcoming primary school leaving exam—to receive a burst of exam preparation. Their work is published in vol. 16 issue 4 of *EFP*.

The Study

The authors use a randomized control trial in Nakuru, Kenya to evaluate the impact of academic camps designed to prepare eighth grade students for the high-stakes exam for secondary schooling on student achievement. 957 students were nominated to participate in the five-day overnight academic camps, and randomization occurred within strata that were based on performance. Classes included instruction in math, language, social studies, and science.

For more details:

- View the [full issue](#).
- See the [full article in *Education Finance and Policy*](#).
- [Sign up here to receive future *EFP Takeaways*](#).
- Summary of:
Schueler, B. & Rodriguez-Segura, D. (2021). Can Camp Get You Into a Better Secondary School? A Field Experiment of Targeted Instruction in Kenya. *Education Finance and Policy*, 16 (4): 609-633.

Findings

For the average student nominated to the program, the authors find no evidence that these overnight camps had particularly large benefits on the high-stakes exam, nor that it increased the probability of overcoming important score thresholds towards secondary school entry, relative to attending a typical week of school.

The authors do find large, positive effects among students attending schools from which few students were nominated for these symposia. Larger benefits for this group might be due to these “low-representation” schools having fewer pre-camp test preparation resources available to them outside of school.

Educational leaders and policymakers should further target summer programs to students with the greatest potential to benefit. They should also consider new approaches to equalizing the distribution and circulation of test preparation materials and resources.

