

Timeline

April-September 2020

Study Type

Randomized Evaluation

Research Implemented by IPA

No

Resilience to Economic Shocks Through Continued Electricity Access: Evidence from Kenya

Researchers

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Abstract

As COVID-19 spreads in lower-income countries, electricity access will be critical for households and firms to continue productive activities, maintain economic connections, and stay up-to-date on the latest public health guidelines. Meanwhile, public health restrictions may cause severe economic impacts, particularly in the poorest areas. We are providing emergency electricity credits to low-income respondents in Kenya to study the impacts of a utility bill subsidy during this crisis. Our research leverages two ongoing projects on electricity access in 7 counties in rural Kenya. We will complement this with a new set of urban residents in Nairobi, giving us a sample of over 2,000 households and firms with pre-paid meters. The treatment group will receive 3 monthly top-ups, each valued at 5 USD (30 kWh), enough to operate a modest set of appliances for a month. We will offer a subset of participants a choice between 5 USD in electricity subsidies or a randomized cash amount between 1-6 USD (we are currently piloting to inform the exact amount). This will allow us to estimate the willingness to pay for electricity access and the value of electricity during an economic crisis.

Project Outcomes of Interest

Electricity usage, household consumption, household income, hours worked outside the home, firm revenue, food security, child education, knowledge of COVID virus, knowledge of COVID symptoms, number of social interactions, mental health

Partners

REMIT Kenya

Impact Goals

- Build resilience and protect the financial health of families and individuals
- Build resilient and adaptable businesses and employment opportunities
- Keep children safe, healthy, and learning
- Reduce COVID-19 transmission rates

Project Data Collection Mode

- CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing)

Link to Pre-Registration

<https://www.socialscienceregistry.org/trials/5941>

Results Status

No Results Yet