Social Marketing, Earnings Expectations and the Educational Choices of Youths in the Dominican Republic

ABSTRACT

We conduct a large-scale evaluation of interventions that present information on the potential benefits of schooling to 7th and 8th grade students in the Dominican Republic. The evaluation includes 600 schools, 25 percent of all public middle schools in the country. The broadest intervention consists of four 15-minute videos that discuss the benefits of additional schooling, watched by classes together. We vary whether these videos present the benefits qualitatively—e.g., emphasizing that schooling may increase wages—or quantitatively—e.g., presenting wage averages and distributions at different levels of schooling—allowing us to isolate the impact of providing quantitative information on the returns to schooling. We also conduct one-on-one video sessions through a novel tablet application, both with parents and children. Finally, we hang posters in classes, designed to highlight key information provided in the videos. To understand the mechanisms behind our results, as well as the schooling decision in general, we also conduct a series of surveys covering 30,000 students to measure beliefs of the potential value of education and students’ educational plans. We present preliminary results of the impacts of the interventions on both the survey outcomes and dropout.