



Title: Subsidised school meals and child well-being

Acronym: SCHOOL_MEALS

Project leader: Sara Ayllón

Host organisation: University of Girona

Main purpose of the project:

This research project seeks to provide new evidence on the causal impact that school-meal subsidies have on children's outcomes in the city of Barcelona, and determine whether the resources devoted to the programme fall short of guaranteeing children the right to nutritious and sufficient food.

Design/methodology/approach:

The project will construct a new database that will merge multiple administrative records and survey data. Our analysis will be based on a regression discontinuity design, which will allow us to identify the causal effect of school-meal subsidies, by comparing children who are (just) entitled to the school-meal subsidy and those who are (just) ineligible.

Potential results:

The ultimate goal is to inform policy makers, as they design effective policies to combat food insecurity among children. We expect to provide results on the causal impact of school-meal subsidies on four important domains for child development: education, behaviour, subjective well-being and health.

Social relevance of the research:

The project is socially relevant because nearly one child in every three in Spain lives below the poverty line. Most importantly, 5.9% of children live in a household that cannot afford to have a meal with meat, chicken or fish (or a vegetarian equivalent) every second day.

Originality/value of the project:

This project is innovative for two main reasons. First, our analysis will be the first to evaluate the causal effect of a means-tested school-meals programme on a large number of outcomes relevant for child development. Second, our analysis will be based on regression discontinuity design, one of the most credible quasi-experimental methods for evaluating public policies.