Impact Evaluation of the National Solidarity Program (NSP-II)

Outline

- Background
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- Identification Strategy
- Evaluation Questions / Hypothesis
- Data, time-line, and some preliminary results
- Opportunities and challenges

Background

- The National Solidarity Program is the single largest development program in Afghanistan (> US$ 1 billion) >> Demand for independent evaluation from World Bank and Donors (ARTF)

- Evaluation team includes leading independent researchers:
  - Fotini Christia, MIT
  - Ruben Enikolopov, New Economic School, Moscow
  - Andrew Beath, World Bank
  - Hamid Gharibzada, IE Coordinator, World Bank
  - Elliot Mghenyi, IE TTL, World Bank

- Main Partners: Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD); NSP program office; implementing agencies (Facilitating NGOS); Vulnerability Analysis Unit (survey unit)

Project Description

- National Solidarity Program (NSP) started in 2003 with two broad objectives:

1. Improving governance:
   - democratic election of village-level Community Development Council (CDC)
   - women empowerment through gender balancing in CDC membership
2. Infrastructure and service delivery:
   - sub-project funded through “block grants” valued at $200 per person with ceiling of $60,000 per village
   - NGO Facilitating Partners (FP’s) support implementation of sub-projects (roads, water, vocational training, irrigation etc)

- NSP in 3 Phases: NSP I (2003-2007); NSP II (2007-2011); & NSP III (2011-2015)

Identification Strategy

- Evaluation of NSP II (2007-2011): about 143 districts - 74 'new' and 69 from phase 1
- 10 out of 74 'new' districts selected to participate
  - large districts to allow for control villages
  - relatively safe districts to allow survey activities
  - ethnic, linguistic, and geographic representation – but southern provinces excluded due to insecurity
- In each of the 10 evaluation districts:
  - NGO implementing partners selected 50 eligible villages with the understanding half will receive project
  - applied 'matched-pair cluster randomization' using multiple variables
  - IE sample: 250 treatment villages and 250 control
  - Village types embedded in contracts for NGO partners

Evaluation Districts

Some Evaluation Questions/Hypothesis

- Impact on village governance:
  - Shift in governance authority from traditional structures to CDC's
  - Increased participation of villagers and improved perceptions on quality of governance
- Impact on empowerment:
  - Increased acceptance of women leadership in village governance
  - Increased engagement of women in intra-household decision making and in economic activities

Some Evaluation Questions/Hypothesis……

- Impact of access to utilities, infrastructure, and services:

  (23% roads/bridges, 22% women vocational training and literacy, 20% drinking water, 15% irrigation, 14% power supply)

  - Reduced travel time and cost
  - Increased school enrolment and attendance
  - Reduced incidence of illnesses (diarrhea)
  - Increased agricultural production

- Economic impacts:

  - Increased consumption
  - Asset building; farm and non-farm (including home improvements)

Data, time-line, and some preliminary findings

- Baseline survey: 2007
  - High statistical balance between treatment and control villages (across 19 variables including assets, various expenditure types, access to utilities and services)
  - But NRVA 2007 survey data suggests statistically significant differences between treatment and rest of Afghanistan (weak external validity)
- First follow up survey: 2009
  - Less than 70 % of sub-projects were completed (it takes at least 18 months)
  - Preliminary findings could capture effects of existence of CDC and continuing sub-project activities (not economic impacts)

Data, time-line, and some preliminary findings

- First follow up survey: 2009 preliminary findings
  - Governance authority marginally transferred from tribal elders to CDC's (suggests co-existence/co-option, not displacement)
  - Improved acceptance of women leaders by males, not females
  - No impact on chance of violent attacks
  - Marginal improvements in school attendance for girls, not boys
  - No impact on objective welfare measures e.g. consumption and assets (as expected)
- Second follow-up survey: 2011 (currently ongoing)
  - All sub-projects were completed by March 2011
  - Better chance of capturing economic impacts
  - Also, to test whether impacts suggested in first follow up hold

Data, time-line, and some preliminary findings

- Wheat distribution experiment: 2011 (currently ongoing)
  - Getting quantitative measures of change in governance behavior (Important! because the process of facilitation may change villagers discourse with outsiders and not actual governance behavior)
  - WFP provides evaluation villages (elders) with wheat to distribute following regular procedures (food aid quite common)
  - Post-distribution surveys to identify process, recipients, their vulnerability status and relationships to elders
  - Test whether food aid distribution is more equitable in treated villages, predatory behaviors, nepotism etc.
- Third follow-up survey (2013?): test sustainability of any impacts

Opportunities and Challenges

- Supportive Client and Bank project team; Plenty of resources
- But insecurity is real >> displacement, accessibility, and attrition

Opportunities and Challenges

- Insecurity raises both the costs of surveying and monitoring

THANK YOU

Statistical balance between NSP Evaluation Sample with Representative Sample of Afghanistan's Rural Population

Indicator	NRVA (Rural Households)			NSP 1st Follow-Up Households			t-statistics
	Mean	S.E.	Obs.	Mean	S.E.	Obs.	
Age of Male Respondent	43.04	0.12	16,143	42.68	0.23	4,660	1.381
Income from Primary Source (*Afghanis*)	60,950	468	16,065	58,618	1155	4,554	1.872
Household Engaged in Agriculture	0.661	0.004	16,143	0.723	0.007	4,625	-7.950
Access to Electricity	0.280	0.004	16,121	0.304	0.007	4,656	-3.065
Last Child Born is Alive	0.994	0.001	9,861	0.975	0.004	1,736	4.938
Last Birth Delivered at Home	0.871	0.004	9,817	0.892	0.007	1,744	-2.541
Last Birth Delivered in Hospital	0.065	0.003	9,817	0.036	0.004	1,744	5.625

Statistical Balance between Treatment and Control Groups

Variable	Mean Level in Control Group	Mean Level in Treatment Group	Normalized Difference	*t*-Statistics
Number of Households in Village	103.02	109.76	0.07	0.76
Number of People in Household	9.87	9.76	- 0.02	- 0.42
Age of Respondent	43.30	43.80	0.04	1.10
Respondent Speaks Dari as Mother Tongue	0.69	0.70	0.04	0.45
Respondent Received no Formal Education	0.71	0.71	0.01	0.18
Household Has Access to Electricity	0.13	0.15	0.04	0.59
Male Health Worker is Available to Treat Villagers	0.10	0.13	0.12	1.32
Female Health Worker is Available to Treat Villagers	0.08	0.10	0.10	1.07
Main Source of Drinking Water is Unprotected Spring	0.27	0.27	- 0.00	- 0.02
Dispute among Villagers Occurred in Past Year	0.37	0.36	- 0.03	- 0.36
No Problems are Experienced in Meeting Household Food Needs	0.45	0.45	0.02	0.38
Household Borrowed Money in Past Year	0.48	0.47	- 0.02	-0.36
Respondent Reports Attending Meeting of Village Council in Past Year	0.30	0.31	0.03	0.59
Expenditures on Weddings in Past Year (*Afghanis*)	11,676	10,380	- 0.03	- 0.73
Expenditures on Food in Past Month (*Afghanis*)	3,644	3,566	- 0.04	- 0.68
Respondent Believes that Women Should be Members of Council	0.41	0.43	0.05	0.92
Views of Women are not Considered in Resolving Disputes	0.51	0.48	- 0.06	- 1.64
Assets	0.00	-0.01	- 0.02	- 0.52
Natural Log of Income	8.67	8.63	- 0.07	- 1.15