

## Emma Riley

### **Office Contact Information**

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### **Home Contact Information**

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### **Current position**

Junior Research Fellow, Christ Church College, Oxford, 2018-present

### **Education**

University of Oxford, DPhil. (Ph.D.) in Economics, *Sept 2019*

Thesis Title: *Essays on Mobile Money Services, Microenterprises and Role Models in Developing Countries*

Supervisors: Stefan Dercon and Climent Quintana-Domeque

Examiners: Tavneet Suri (MIT) and Johannes Abeler (Oxford)

University of Oxford, MPhil. Economics, *Distinction, 2015*

University of Cambridge, B.A., Economics, *First-Class Honours, 2010*

### **References:**

Professor Stefan Dercon (supervisor)

Blavatnik School of Government  
University of Oxford  
[stefan.dercon@economics.ox.ac.uk](mailto:stefan.dercon@economics.ox.ac.uk)

Professor Anandi Mani  
Blavatnik School of Government  
University of Oxford  
[anandi.mani@bsg.ox.ac.uk](mailto:anandi.mani@bsg.ox.ac.uk)

Professor Climent Quintana-Domeque  
(supervisor)

Department of Economics  
University of Exeter  
[c.quintana-domeque@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:c.quintana-domeque@exeter.ac.uk)

Professor Tavneet Suri  
Sloan School of Management  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
[tavneet@mit.edu](mailto:tavneet@mit.edu)

### **Job market paper**

#### **Resisting sharing pressure in the household using mobile money: Experimental evidence on microenterprise investment in Uganda**

I examine whether changing the way microfinance loans are disbursed to utilise widespread mobile money services impacts the businesses of female microfinance borrowers. Using a field experiment of 3,000 borrowers of BRAC Uganda, I compare disbursement of a loan as cash to disbursement of a loan onto a mobile money account. After 9 months, women who received their microfinance loan on the mobile money account had 15% higher business profits and 11% higher levels of business capital. Impacts were greatest for women who experienced pressure to share money with others in the household at baseline, suggesting that providing the loan in a private account gives women more control over how the loan is used.

### **Publications**

**Mobile money and risk sharing against village shocks** (*Journal of Development Economics*, December 2018)

This paper looks at how mobile money services such as M-Pesa can allow villages to respond to large aggregate shocks (e.g. floods or droughts) and hence allow risk sharing not only within a village but across a larger risk sharing network. A village is unable to self-insure itself against an aggregate shock that affects everyone in the village at the same time, but mobile money services, by allowing remittances to be sent quickly and cheaply, allow villages to insure each other against aggregate shocks.

### **Working papers**

#### **Role models in movies: the impact of Queen of Katwe on students' educational attainment** (*Revise and resubmit second round, Review of Economics and Statistics*)

This paper presents experimental evidence on the impact of a role model on secondary school student exam performance in Uganda. Students preparing to take their national exams were individually randomised to see either a movie featuring a female role model from a poor background succeeding at chess, Queen of Katwe, or to see a placebo movie. I find that treatment with the role-model movie leads to lower secondary school students being less likely to fail their maths exam a week later: 85% of those who watched Queen of Katwe passed the exam, whereas only 73% of those who didn't passed. This effect is strongest for female and lower ability students. For upper secondary school students, treatment with Queen of Katwe 1 month before their exams results in an increase in their total exam score of 0.13 standard deviations. Effects of treatment are strongest for female students in the compulsory mathematics paper. In both classes, female treated students are more likely to remain in education in subsequent years, closing the gender gap with their male peers. This study highlights the power of a movie role model as a way to improve secondary school students' educational attainment and close gender gaps.

#### **Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on economic outcomes and well-being of rural communities in Western Uganda** with Mahreen Mahmud (*Revise and Resubmit, World Development*)

We provide evidence on the economic and well-being impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on a sample of households in rural Uganda. Our sample consists of about 1,270 households randomly drawn from rural villages in western Uganda and surveyed in-person in early March 2020, just before the lockdown. We followed up with this sample from May 2020, reaching over 85% of them by phone.

#### **Social networks, role models, peer effects, and aspirations** with Anandi Mani

We review the literature on pathways through which social networks may influence social mobility in developing countries. We find that social networks support members in tangible ways—via access to opportunities for migration, credit, trading relationships, information on jobs, and new technologies—as well as in intangible ways, such as shaping their beliefs, hopes, and aspirations, through role models and peers. Nevertheless, networks can disadvantage non-members, typically the poor and marginalized. Recent evidence suggests a range of policy tools that could help mitigate disadvantages faced by excluded groups: temporary incentives to encourage experimentation into new regions, occupations, or technologies, and role models—real and virtual—to mitigate psychosocial challenges faced by marginalized groups. Targeting large fractions of marginalized groups simultaneously could increase the effectiveness of such policies by leveraging the influence of existing social networks.

### **Selected Work in Progress:**

**Utilising mobile money services to expand banking access in Ghana** (with Abu Shonchoy and Robert Darko Osei)

**Impact of a village-based poverty alleviation programme in Uganda** (with Mahreen Mahmud)

**The Role of Mobile Banking for Microenterprises amid the COVID-19 Crisis in Ghana** (with Abu Shonchoy)

**Social norm constraints to enterprise growth** (with Mahreen Mahmud and Claire Cullen)

**Economic and Psychological Constraints to Women's Empowerment** (with Kate Orkin and Mahreen Mahmud)

**Research Grants:**

2020	Digital Identification and Finance Initiative in Africa (DigiFI) “Utilising mobile money services to expand banking access in Ghana”, co-PI, with Abu Shonchoy & Robert Darko Osei	\$60,000
2020	John Fell Fund “Increasing mobile banking use among rural populations in Ghana”, lead-PI	£28,320
2020	Christ Church Research Centre, “The Role of Mobile Banking for Microenterprises amid the COVID-19 Crisis in Ghana”, lead-PI	£19,600
2020	Economic, Social, Cultural & Environmental Impacts of COVID-19: Urgent Response Fund “Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on economic outcomes and well-being of rural communities in Western Uganda”, lead-PI, with Mahreen Mahmud	£13,300
2019	Digital Identification and Finance Initiative in Africa (DigiFI) “The impact of salary payment frequency on consumption smoothing, saving and investment patterns of civil servants in Ghana, co-PI, with Abu Shonchoy	\$10,000
2018	Christ Church Research Centre, “Understanding how social norms constrain female entrepreneurs in Uganda”, lead-PI, with Mahreen Mahmud & Claire Cullen	£10,000
2017	John Fell Fund, “Direct Effects of Cash Transfers and Role Models”, co-PI, with Kate Orkin & Mahreen Mahmud	£30,000
2017	IPA Intimate Partner Violence Initiative, “Direct Effects of Cash Transfers and Role Models”, co-PI, with Kate Orkin & Mahreen Mahmud	\$125,000
2016	Anonymous Donor, “The Behavioural Repercussions of Mobile Money at BRAC”, lead-PI	\$150,000
2016	Anonymous Donor, “Learning about Role Models: The Queen of Katwe”, lead-PI	\$30,000

**Teaching Experience:**

2019	Lecturer, Msc in Economics for Development, Applications of Behavioural Economics to the Developing World, University of Oxford
2019	Tutorials (undergraduate class), Quantitative methods, University of Oxford
2018	Tutorials (undergraduate class), Macroeconomics Prelims, University of Oxford
2015 - 2020	Tutorials (undergraduate class), The Economics of Developing Countries, University of Oxford
2014	Lecturer, Business Communication, Oxford Prep International Summer School Oriel College, University of Oxford

**Presentations (including scheduled) – last 3 years:**

2021	ASSA conference
2020	BREAD Virtual conference on development economics ( <a href="#">link</a> ); NBER summer institute on Gender ( <a href="#">link</a> ); Webinar series in Finance and Development; University of Reading (invited seminar); Norwegian School of Economics (invited seminar); Department for Development, UK (invited Seminar)
2019	Nova school of business and economics (invited seminar); CSAE Conference, University of Oxford; Novafrica conference, Nova University; DIAL conference, University of Paris; Conference of the European Economic Association, Manchester University; Manchester University, UK (invited seminar); Firms and Development

- workshop, DIW Berlin (invited participant); 1st Annual Conference of the Private Sector Development Research Network, Geneva
- 2018 Pacdev, University of California, Davis; CSAE Conference, University of Oxford; Royal Economic Society, University of Sussex; Globalization and Development Conference, Georg-August-Universität; GREThA-IDEA, Bordeaux University; What works for Africa's poorest children, Kampala, Uganda; Exeter University, UK (invited seminar)
- 2017 Spanish Economic Association, Barcelona Graduate School of Economics; NEUDC, Tufts University; Summer School in Development Economics, Prato

**Refereeing**

- 2020 Journal of Development Economics; *Economica*; Journal of Development Studies
- 2019 Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics; World Development
- 2018 Economic Journal; Economics Development and Cultural Change

**Honours, Scholarships, and Fellowships:**

- 2019 Edgeworth prize for best DPhil thesis, Department of Economics, University of Oxford
- 2019 DIAL Conference best PhD paper award
- 2017-2018 Department of Economics Bursary, University of Oxford
- 2013-2017 ESRC Studentship, University of Oxford

**Other Employment:**

- 2015-2018 Field experiment on aspirations and cash transfers, Kenya (Kisumu), Research Assistant for Stefan Dercon and Kate Orkin
- 2012 Project on role models and microfinance, India (Jodhpur), Intern at Aastha Credit Co-operative Society
- 2010-2012 AT Kearney Management Consultants, UK (London), Business Analyst

**Other Publications:**

“Consolidating Africa's Mobile Banking Revolution”, Summary Report (with Rachel Cassidy, Njuguna Ndung'u, Zainab Usman and Emily Jones) [Conference report available here](#)