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## Assessing the Impact of Accessibility to Informal Educational Activities on Educational Outcomes

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### Objectives

Participation in non-formal education activities, such as the Scouts, is associated with the development of soft-cognitive skills linked to academic achievement and long-term socioeconomic success. Access to such activities varies geographically, and therefore 'exposure' may be quasi-randomly allocated to young people.

### Methods

This study employs a quantitative analysis using Scout Hall data linked to educational outcomes data. Distance between schools and the nearest scout hall is used as an instrumental variable to assess causal effects, under the assumption that accessibility influences achievement only through participation. The analysis follows a two-stage least squares approach to estimate the impact of scouting on educational performance and later socioeconomic status. Robustness checks include alternative model specifications to assess the strength and validity of the instrument. Our plan is to extend this work to the Longitudinal Education Outcomes dataset.

### Results

Analysis of approximately 26,000 primary and secondary schools and 7,000 scout halls examines whether proximity to scout halls predicts participation in scouting activities, supporting its potential use as an instrumental variable. The first-stage analysis assesses whether distance to the nearest scout hall is a strong predictor of scouting participation, providing evidence for its relevance. Second-stage analyses estimate the effect of scouting participation on educational attainment, accounting for key confounders. Sensitivity analyses explore whether distance influences outcomes through alternative pathways, testing the validity of the instrument. These analyses provide a detailed examination of the relationship between extracurricular accessibility and educational achievement within a robust administrative data framework. We find evidence, particularly for children from more disadvantaged

backgrounds, on educational attainment, through participation in the Scouts.

### Conclusion

This study examines the validity of distance to scout halls as an instrumental variable for participation in non-formal education activities. By establishing a causal link between scouting and educational outcomes, this research provides evidence on how geographic opportunity disparities shape socioeconomic trajectories, informing policy on non-formal education accessibility.

