



Leyla Mocan



Leyla was born and raised in Denver, Colorado but moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana during high school. She has always been interested in civic engagement and by her senior year she ran her school's largest volunteer club, which contributed over 3,000 hours of community service to the Baton Rouge area. In high school, Leyla also worked as a teaching assistant with the summer remediation program of the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program, which provides summer school for fourth graders who have failed state standardized tests. At Penn, Leyla has spent her time volunteering for KIPP West Philadelphia Middle School and spent a summer working for the Teach for America South Louisiana Regional Office. She is currently working on a research project examining the economic impacts of Turkish educational reforms in the 1990s. Most recently, she interned at the Office of Economic Policy at the United States Department of the Treasury, where she was able to explore her interest in the role of economics in government policy. Leyla is a student in the Wharton School concentrating in Statistics and pursuing a minor in Mathematics. She also serves on the University Honor Council, enjoys working as a teaching assistant and continues to pursue her love of cooking and food writing.

CAPSTONE PROJECT

“The Impact of Education on Wages: Analysis of an Education Reform in Turkey”

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In 1997 Turkey passed a law making middle school completion compulsory, increasing the mandatory education from 5 to 8 years. At the time of this policy change, only 3-in-5 students were completing middle school in Turkey. In this paper, I investigate the effect of this law change on educational attainment and explore how this varied across individuals. My results indicate that the fraction of children completing middle school increased more than 20 percentage points as a result of this reform. The effects were especially pronounced for girls (particularly those living in rural areas): I estimate that as a result of the reform, an additional half a million girls attained a middle school diploma. Despite the large policy-induced increase in educational attainment, I find little evidence of a corresponding increase in labor force participation or full-time work. My results suggested wage gains of about 14 percent with these benefits concentrated among females. Taken together, my findings demonstrate that the policy change induced a dramatic change in educational attainment among Turkey's youth but that the economic benefits of the change have so far been somewhat limited, perhaps because of changes in the quality of schooling.