

ACCESS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION IN ALBANIA: INCENTIVES, OBSTACLES, AND POLICY SPILLOVERS

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When judged either by educational attainment of adult population or by secondary and tertiary enrollment rates, Albania compares very unfavorably to most European countries, including its neighbors.

This study analyzes the determinants of secondary enrollment using data from Albanian Living Standards Measurement Survey 2002-2003 and Population Census 2001.

The focus of the paper is to investigate the importance of access to school for enrollment. The findings indicate that (controlling for family background) the following factors have strong negative effect on propensity to enroll in secondary school:

- Absence of a secondary school in the community;
- The distance from the residence location to the main school serving the community;
- Transportation cost from the community to its “main” secondary school;
- Absence of a pre-school (public child-care) in the community (in rural areas);
- Presence of younger siblings.

On the other hand,

- In rural areas, proximity to a university city (as opposed to other urban centers) substantially increases likelihood of secondary enrollment;
- In urban areas, a similar effect has emerged in 2003, plausibly as a response to opening the market for private universities.

The above findings suggest that developing tertiary education and child-care system might be efficient policy alternatives to building new schools.

Other findings confirm importance of school quality, local labor market conditions and social capital:

- Proportion of teachers with university education in the main school serving the community has positive effect on secondary enrollment;
- Easier access to paid employment for young individuals with basic education has negative effect on propensity to continue education;
- In rural areas, other things equal, enrollment is higher in districts with a larger share of population with at least secondary education.

Key words: school access, school quality, opportunity costs, family background, Albania.