

# PAUL SIRMA

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## EDUCATION

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**University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill** Chapel Hill, NC  
Ph.D. in Public Policy August 2016-May 2023 (expected)  
Dissertation committee: Sudhanshu Handa (chair), Brigitte Seim, Gustavo Angeles,  
Amber Peterman, Steven W. Hemelt

**Colgate University** Hamilton, NY  
B.A. in Quantitative Economics and Econometrics August 2011-May 2015

## RESEARCH INTEREST

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International Development, Social Protection, Education, Economics of Farm Households

## PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

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**More evidence on the impacts of government social protection in sub-Saharan Africa: Ghana, Malawi, Zimbabwe. *Development Policy*, (2021) 00:1-22** (with Sudhanshu Handa and Frank Otchere)

## WORKING PAPERS

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**Long-term impacts of unconditional cash transfers on schooling: evidence from Malawi** (*Job Market Paper*)

Abstract: Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs) are among the most popular social protection programs in Africa. The primary objective of these programs is to reduce poverty and hunger. Short-term evaluations of UCTs in Africa have also documented their effectiveness in increasing school enrollment. However, we still know very little about their effectiveness in the long term. This paper fills this gap in the literature by presenting long-term evidence (8 years since baseline) of a UCT in Malawi on school enrollment and grade attainment. In the long run, I find that older out-of-school girls in the early treatment households accumulated more years of schooling than their peers in the late treatment households

**The effect of unconditional cash transfers on labor allocation and farm productivity** (with Sudhanshu Handa)

Abstract: In this paper, we show that liquidity is an important constraint that prevent households from allocating their labor efficiently. We estimate the impacts of unconditional cash transfer program in Malawi, 30 months since baseline, and find large positive impacts on agricultural production and on-farm labor. We also find negative impacts on casual or *ganyu* labor. To explain these results, we test and reject the separation assumption of the agricultural household models. We show that demographic variables are associated with on-farm labor demand. We also show that

cash transfer enables treated households to invest in agricultural inputs which increases their on-farm productivity

## WORK IN PROGRESS

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### **Dosage effects of unconditional cash transfers: evidence from the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Program** (*with Sudhanshu Handa*)

This paper studies whether there is a causal relationship between duration in a cash transfer program and poverty in the context of an unconditional cash transfer (UCT) program in Malawi

### **Authorship in economic development journals** (*with Amber Peterman and Dharini Bhatia*)

This paper provides a rich description of the state of authorship representation—as it relates to authors’ country of origin/affiliation and gender—in the economic development journals

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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### **Graduate Research Assistant** Carolina Population Center, UNC at Chapel Hill The Transfer Project 2019-present

Assists research teams with data cleaning and analysis. Writes STATA ado files to produce publication-ready tables. Evaluates program impacts. Writes sections of the report. Review survey instruments. Assists with data collection fieldwork.

### **Quantitative Research Assistant** Washington, DC American Institutes for Research (AIR) July 2015-June 2018

Assisted senior researchers in the International Research and Evaluation Division at AIR. Evaluated impacts of programs covering broad topics—including agriculture, education, reading and literacy, and social protection

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### **Instructor** Department of Public Policy at UNC at Chapel Hill Senior Capstone in Public Policy Spring 2020

### **Teaching Assistant** Department of Public Policy at UNC at Chapel Hill Microeconomics Foundation for Public Policy Spring 2019 Justice in Public Policy Fall 2018

## PRESENTATIONS

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Center for the Study of African Economies (CSAE), Virtual March 2022

## FELLOWSHIPS

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UNC Graduate School Dissertation Completion Fellowship August 2022-May 2023

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

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### Field Work

Nkhata Bay and Zomba, Malawi May 2022  
Rufiji, Tanzania July 2013

### Reviewer

The Journal of International Development June 2022

### Technical Training Workshop

Organized by African Economic Research Consortium & UNICEF Nairobi, Kenya  
Instructor May 2019

### Internships

Ifakara Health Institute Dar es Salaam, Tanzania  
Research Intern June-August 2014  
Field Supervisor June-August 2013

## REFERENCES

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**Sudhanshu Handa** (PhD committee chair)  
Kenan Eminent Professor of Public Policy  
Department of Public Policy  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
shanda@unc.edu

**Gustavo Angeles** (PhD committee member)  
Associate Professor  
Department of Maternal and Child Health  
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**Steven W. Hemelt** (PhD committee member)  
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