

Besufekad (Besu) Alemu

332L Ruttan Hall
1994 Buford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55108
Website: sites.google.com/view/besufekadalemu

Phone: (718) 208-0900
Email: alemu005@umn.edu
Citizenship: United States

Education

Ph.D. Applied Economics, University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, 2020 (expected).

Dissertation: Studies of Ethnic and Racial Disparities in Labor and Educational Outcomes

Committee: Joe Ritter (advisor), Elizabeth Davis, Clea McNeely, Steve Ruggles, and Aaron Sojourner

M.A. Economics; B.A. Economics; and B.A. Mathematics, CUNY - Hunter College, 2012.

Research Interests

Labor and Demographic Economics, Education Policy, & Policy Analysis

Skills

Quantitative Research

- Applying econometric methods, such as fixed effects and count data methods, in dissertation chapters
- Conducting data analyses on the effectiveness of the Urban Productive Safety Net Program (UPSNP), a poverty alleviation program implemented in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Using survival analyses, difference-in-difference, count, binary, and other econometric and statistical methods to analyze the effectiveness of a truancy intervention program and the sources of racial disparities in referral to the program and juvenile court
- Evaluated the effectiveness of the Karen Tobacco Free (KTF) and the Karen Intergenerational Health Collaborative (KIHC) programs in reducing tobacco usage among Karen youth and adults who settled in Minnesota using statistical methods, such as the Wilcoxon rank-sum test
- Studied the impacts resident non-biological fathers in the home, on biological father-child closeness, visitation, child support payments, and child welfare using ordinal and other regression models

Data Management

- Using confidential administrative data from eight state and local agencies, which includes academic, social services, and juvenile court records, to evaluate the effectiveness of a truancy intervention
- Applying probabilistic record linking methods to find the same individuals between the 1920 and 1940 cross-sectional censuses prior to conducting empirical research for multiple chapters in my dissertation
- Interpreting and harmonizing surveys from multiple countries throughout the world with data processed through the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International project
- Imported test score information into Excel in order to analyze the pre- and post-test effects of KTF and KIHC programs on perceptions and use of tobacco
- Monitored components of three programs (Addis Kidan, Addis Berhan, and Biruh Tesfah) which aimed to empower vulnerable adolescent girls at risk of early marriage and school drop out

Collaborative Research

- Co-authored reports, an OP/ED, and a blog post, and conducting data analyses on projects related to Uganda and Ethiopia
- Working with researchers from different fields, and state, district, and school officials, to evaluate the effectiveness of a Midwestern truancy intervention program
- Mentored an undergraduate student in developing organizational, data management, and presentation skills and co-presented final work to faculty and staff at ISDRI
- Won the Participant's Choice Award at the national level at Emory University and the intramural public health competition at the University of Minnesota as part of a multidisciplinary team, by designing pilot programs addressing (i) obstetric fistula in India, and (ii) the Syrian Refugee Crisis
- Collaborated with Dr. Ronald Mincy to investigate the effects of father-child social and psychological closeness on children's social, economic, and psychological development, using the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study
- Worked with enumerators and others conducting survey fieldwork for the implementation of the Biruh Tesfah ("Bright Future") program, which aims to end child marriage and empower out-of-school girls in urban Ethiopia

Communication

- Writing a demographic report on Uganda through data visualization and summarizing information from the World Bank, Demographic Health Survey, United Nations World Population Prospects, and other sources
- Co-authored a blog post, OP/ED piece, and a press release reporting the findings of the survey on the welfare and wellbeing of refugees with Dr. Carolina Mejía-Mantilla
- Presented findings on racial disparities in referral to a truancy intervention program to a school district
- Leading author evaluating sources of racial disparities in unexcused absences using confidential academic and social services data
- Enhancing country-specific documentation of variables for public release by comparing samples within countries and running validations against existing country-specific demographic information
- Delivered a 30-page report summarizing the findings of the evaluation of the KTF and KIHC programs to WellShare International
- Leading recitation for three economics courses, assisting students during in-class exercises, and communicated with multiple faculty on tasks for multiple courses

Experience

Consultant

World Bank Group, Poverty and Equity Global Practice

March 2019 - Present

Graduate Research Assistant

School of Social Work, University of Minnesota

January 2017 - Present

Institute for Social Research and Data Innovation (ISRDI), IPUMS-International

August 2015 - Present

Consultant

Community Health Initiative (CHI), WellShare International

February 2017 - June 2017

Researcher

Global Health Case Competition

November 2015 - April 2016

Summer Diversity Fellow

ISRDI, IPUMS-Historical

June 2015 - August 2015

Teaching Assistant

Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

Managerial Economics

January 2015 - May 2015

Introductory Microeconomics

August 2014 - December 2014

Research Assistant

Columbia School of Social Work

September 2010 - April 2013

The Population Council, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

June 2013 - July 2013

Teaching Assistant

Department of Economics, CUNY - Hunter College

Macroeconomic Theory (Master's)

January 2011 - May 2011

Introductory Microeconomics

August 2010 - December 2010

Publications

McNeely, C., Lee, W., Rosenbaum, J., **Alemu, B.**, & Renner, L., 2019. "Long-Term Effects of Truancy Diversion on School Attendance: A Quasi-Experimental Study with Linked Administrative Data." *Prevention Science*, 20(7), 996-1008.

Lee, W., McNeely, C., Rosenbaum, J., **Alemu, B.**, & Renner, L., 2019. "Does Court Diversion Improve School Attendance among Habitually Truant Elementary Students? Evidence from Five School Districts." (*Revised and Resubmitted, Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*)

Working Papers

Alemu, B., "Local Ethnic Capital and the Intergenerational Economic Mobility of Immigrants."

Alemu, B., "Southern Lynching Exposure and the Economic Outcomes of Black Men."

Alemu, B., McNeely, C., & Lee, W. "Is being Black Unexcused? The Relationship between Policies Guiding the Coding of Absences and Racial Disparities in Unexcused Absences."

McNeely, C., **Alemu, B.**, Lee, W., & Rosenbaum, J. , 2019. "Unexcused Inequity: Explaining Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice Involvement for Truancy."

Web-based Publications and Policy Briefs

McNeely, C., Lee, W. F., **Alemu, B.**, Rosenbaum, J. & Renner, L. M. (2018). Evaluation of Ramsey County's Truancy Intervention Programs: Policy implications for court diversion programs (Minn-LInK brief No. 37). Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN.

Mejía-Mantilla, C. & **Alemu, B.** (2019, October 22). Turning a challenge into an opportunity: Informing Uganda's refugee policy response.

Presentations

2019 - Southern Economic Association (SEA) Annual Meeting (Fort Lauderdale, FL); Midwest Economic Association (MEA) Annual Meeting (St. Louis, MO)
2018 - Population Association of America (PAA) Annual Meeting (Denver, CO)
2017 - PAA Annual Meeting (Chicago, IL), MEA Annual Meeting (Evanston, IL)
2016 - MEA Annual Meeting (Evanston, IL)
2015 - PAA Annual Meeting (San Diego, CA); Association for Public Policy and Management Annual Meeting (Miami, FL)

Fellowships and Awards

Diversity Fellow at the Minnesota Population Center, 2015
College of Food and Agricultural Studies Fellowship, 2013-2014
Sam Chung Hsieh and Alice Yen-Hee Hsieh Fellowship, 2013
Diversity of Views and Experiences (DOVE) Fellowship, 2012
Community of Scholars Program (COSP) Participant, 2012
The Lorraine Joan Anagnos Scholarship for Graduate Studies, 2011
Full Merit Scholarship to the Macaulay Honors College, 2005-2009

Professional Service and Memberships

American Economic Association (AEA)
AEA Mentoring Program
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)
Midwest Economic Association (MEA)
Minnesota Population Center (MPC) - *Voting Graduate Student on Advisory Board (2017-2018)*
National Economic Association (NEA)
Population Association of America (PAA)
Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE)
Southern Economic Association (SEA)

Skills

Computing: Stata, R, SPSS, MATLAB, Mathematica, Excel, L^AT_EX, Unix
Languages: English (fluent), Amharic (fluent)

References

Joe Ritter (Advisor)

Professor, Director of Graduate Studies
Department of Applied Economics
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

Phone: 612-625-0442
E-mail: jritter@umn.edu

Elizabeth Davis

Professor
Department of Applied Economics
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

Phone: 612-625-3772
E-mail: edavis@umn.edu

Clea McNeely
Associate Professor
Department of Public Health
University of Tennessee - Knoxville

Phone: 865-974-5041
E-mail: cmcneely@utk.edu

Steve Ruggles
Regents Professor History and Population Studies
Director, Institute for Social Research and Data Innovation
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

Phone: 612-624-5818
E-mail: ruggles@umn.edu

Aaron Sojourner
Associate Professor
Department of Work and Organizations
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

Phone: 612-624-9521
E-mail: asojourn@umn.edu

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