

1. Dupas, P., Karlan, D., Robinson, J., & Ubfal, D. (2018). Banking the Unbanked? Evidence from Three Countries. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 10(2), 257–297. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26528389>

financial services. On a macro level, a vast literature has established the importance of the banking sector on growth and development (for evidence, see Jayaratne and Strahan 1996; Black and Strahan 2002; Levine 2005; and Beck, Demirgüç-Kunt, and Levine 2007).

Dupas et al (2018) studied the effects of broadening access to bank services among the poor in three selected countries – Malawi, Uganda and Chile. The researchers partnered with local banks and offered completely free bank accounts to poor households and then monitored the bank accounts for a period of 2 years. Banking services are generally regarded as a positive driving force for economic prosperity. The value of the research findings, then, lies in the fact that they illustrate how this positive driving force can have vastly different impacts when implemented in different countries. In Malawi and Uganda, for example, approximately 80% of the subjects did not find use for their bank accounts, despite them being free. The study concludes that solely expanding access to bank accounts does not significantly improve the welfare of poor people, but it might be beneficial at higher levels of economic prosperity.

2. Adam, L., Soekarni, M., & Inayah, I. (2021). Indonesia's Ultra Microcredit Programme: Financing Micro Businesses, Empowering the Poor. *Journal of Southeast Asian Economies*, 38(2), 263–280. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27041376>

Adam et al (2021) analyzed the Ultra Microcredit (UMi) initiative introduced by the Indonesian government. The UMi program is aimed at assisting micro businesses (MBs) owned by people who are poor and vulnerable by offering affordable and easy-to-obtain loans. Despite the small number of surveyed MBs, the study does suggest that microcredit might provide positive outcomes for the people taking part in the initiative. However, the researchers also show that the program's beneficiaries are disproportionately concentrated in Java and that the interest rate is too high for some to access the credit. While the study results are based on a statistically too small a group to bear much reliability, the positive findings do provide value for further research on the topic of Microfinance.

3. Pantaleo, I. M., & Chagama, A. M. (2018). Impact of Microfinance Institutions on Household Welfare in Tanzania: Propensity Score Matching Approach. *The African Review: A Journal of African Politics, Development and International Affairs*, 45(2), 168–203. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45420013>

Pantaleo and Chagama (2018) examined the effect of microfinance on the well-being of households by comparing individuals who had access to microfinance services in Tanzania with those who did not for the year 2013. The research employed a Propensity Score Matching Approach to evaluate the impact of microfinance borrowing on various indicators of household welfare. The findings indicate that microfinance borrowers tend to have higher monthly incomes than non-borrowers. However, it also suggests that while borrowing does lead to an increase in monthly income, it does not result in diversification of household assets ownership. Household assets tended to remain at the same levels among both the banked and unbanked

groups. Still, the statistical improvement in earned monthly income is a valuable finding both for researchers and policy makers.