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DO ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS SWAY VOTERS? EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM
UGANDA

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Do Anti-Poverty Programs Sway Voters? Experimental Evidence from Uganda

A Ugandan government program allowed groups of young people to submit proposals to start skilled enterprises. Among 535 eligible proposals, the government randomly selected 265 to receive grants of nearly \$400 per person. Blattman et al. (2014) showed that, after four years, the program raised employment by 17% and earnings 38%. This paper shows that, rather than rewarding the government in elections, beneficiaries increased opposition party membership, campaigning, and voting. Higher incomes are associated with opposition support, and we hypothesize that financial independence frees the poor to express political

preferences publicly, being less reliant on patronage and other political transfers.

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