Title
Improving Bureaucratic Effectiveness during the COVID-19 Crisis

Authors and affiliations and contact emails
Catherine Rodríguez, Universidad de los Andes, cathrodr@uniandes.edu.co
Carlos Schmidt-Padilla, The University of California at Berkeley, cschmidtpadilla@gmail.com
Daniel Morales, IDEICE and PUCMM, daniel.morales@ideice.gob.do, dr.morales@ce.pucmm.edu.do

Abstract
We study whether positive and negative reinforcement messages to supervisors can help improve bureaucratic outcomes in times of crisis. In many parts of the developing world, it is difficult to get bureaucrats to complete tasks. Focusing on school principals' supervisors in the Dominican Republic—school district officials—and the urgency to get detailed information on curricular completion prior to the COVID-19 health emergency, we randomize reinforcement mechanisms to get district officials to incentivize the principals under their supervision to complete a task. After the official deadline for the completion of the task has passed, we create information channels (WhatsApp groups) to each district in which we provide them with a list of complying and non-complying schools. For districts in treatment group 1, we provide a positive, reinforcement message with the list, and for districts in treatment group 2, a negative, reinforcement message.

Data description
Our primary outcome measure is schools' completion of a status report on their curricular offering prior to the start of the COVID-19 health emergency. Since the unit of analysis is school districts (122 school districts), of particular interest, is the percentage of schools in a district that completed the report.

JEL codes for the project
O31, O38, D90

Key-words
Bureaucratic compliance, COVID-19

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