


# Using Trial-and-Adopt to reduce school dropouts

The case of Greece's Management Consulting in VET.





# Management Consultancy in the Public Sector: Evidence from Greece

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# Challenges faced by the Greek Economy

40%

**Unemployment**

14.3%

**NEETs**

30%

**VET School  
Dropouts**

**Low productivity and hence low long-term growth**


# Can we reduce school dropouts by improving school management?



# Why management?

1. It has proven to be effective in improving outcomes in the private sector.
2. It can be highly cost-effective.

# The setting

1. 49 vocational schools (upper secondary) under the Greek Public Employment Service.
  2. 2-year education program for students between 15 and 29 y.o.
  3. 31 specialties (bakery and pastry, hairdressing, culinary arts, IT support, mechanics etc.)
  4. Combines
    - in-the-classroom and lab training (21-22 hours/week)
    - on-the-job training (i.e., apprenticeship) (up to 6 hours/day)
- 
- Highly Valued  
by Students**

# The intervention

1. Appoint a **school management team** (director + 1-3 school employees)
2. Weekly online meetings for 5 months + 1 in-person visit from the **management consultants**.
3. Data tools: **dashboard** to monitor Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and a list of students “at risk of dropping out.”
4. **Structured meetings**: structured agenda, track KPIs, root cause analysis, design an Action Plan, assign clear responsibilities, follow up on the Action Plan

# Randomization

## 25 randomly selected T schools:

- **Management consultancy intervention** from Nov 2022 to April 2023
- **Goal:** help schools to devise and implement effective strategies to **reduce dropout rates**

## 24 randomly selected C schools:

- No intervention

All schools were asked to maintain their information system monitoring absenteeism, allocation to apprenticeships, and dropouts, up-to-date



# Data

## **Meeting-level** (T schools only) [Nov. 2022 – Apr. 2023]

- weekly data on implementation

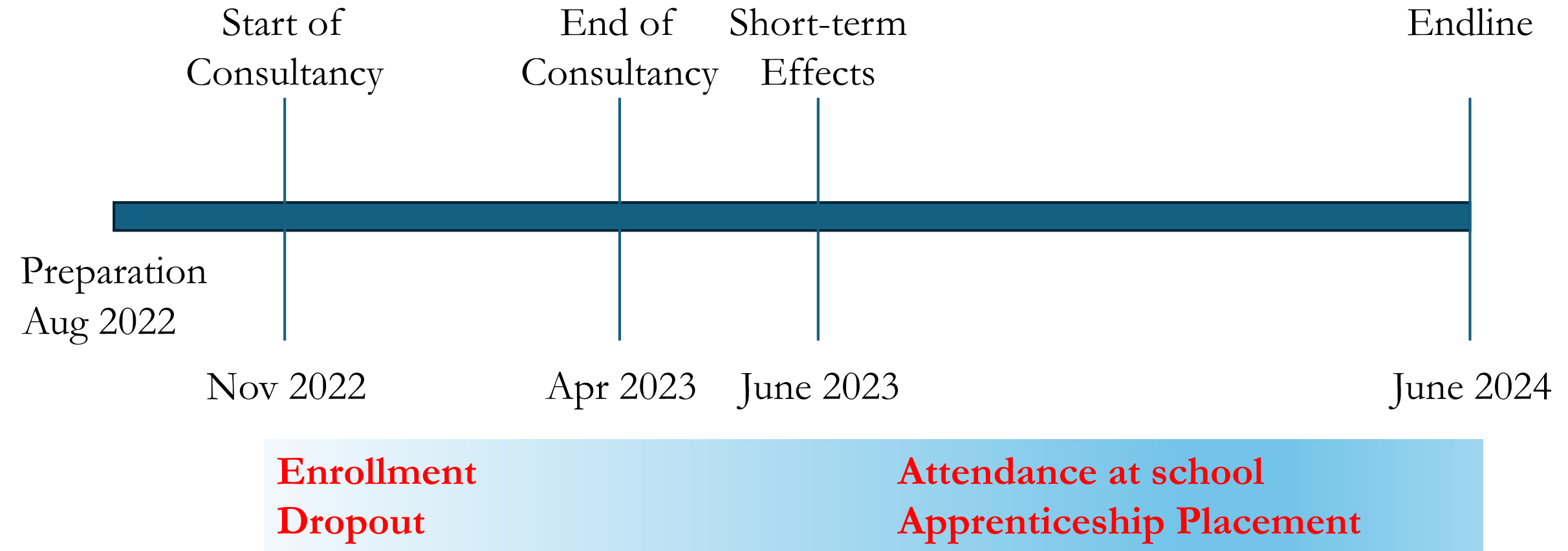
## **Student-level** [2015-2019 and 2022-2024]

- admin: enrollment, attendance at school and internship, dropout, grades, and demographic characteristics
- end-line survey: satisfaction, reasons to enroll

## **School-level**

- baseline survey: directors' perceptions about drop-out
- admin: teacher characteristics [2015-2024]

# Timeline and summary of empirical strategy



# What did the authors find?



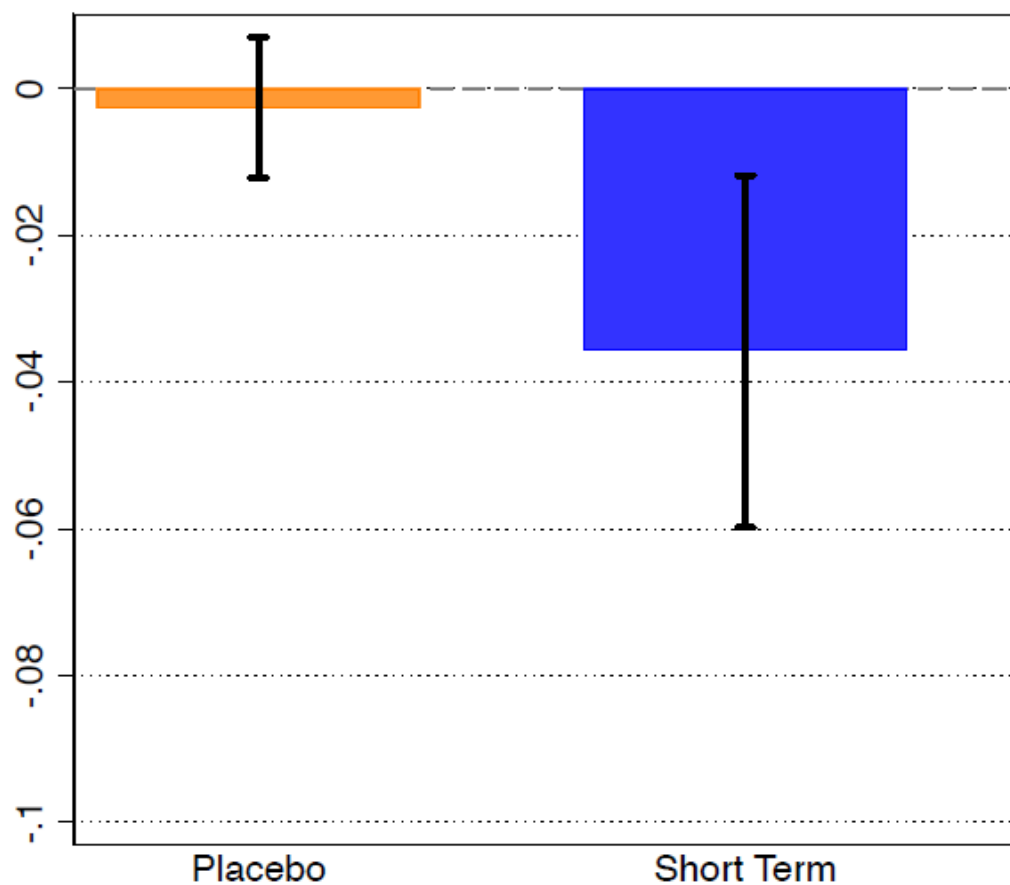
# Did the school's "management team" participated in the consultancy meetings?

School meeting **participation was 97%**--24 schools participated in all meetings, and one dropped out of the program after 4 sessions.

	N	Mean	Std Dev
N mgmt team members attending the meeting	412	2.32	0.95
Is there an <b>action plan</b> established?	412	0.91	0.29
Was the <b>action plan</b> revised	412	0.83	0.38
The <b>dashboard</b> contains information on:			
Students enrolled	412	0.90	0.30
Students enrolled but never showed	412	0.89	0.31
Students enrolled that showed			
10 days or less in the last 30 days	412	0.87	0.33
Students w/ internships	412	0.90	0.30
Was the <b>list of students at risk</b>			
of dropping out updated?	412	0.38	0.49

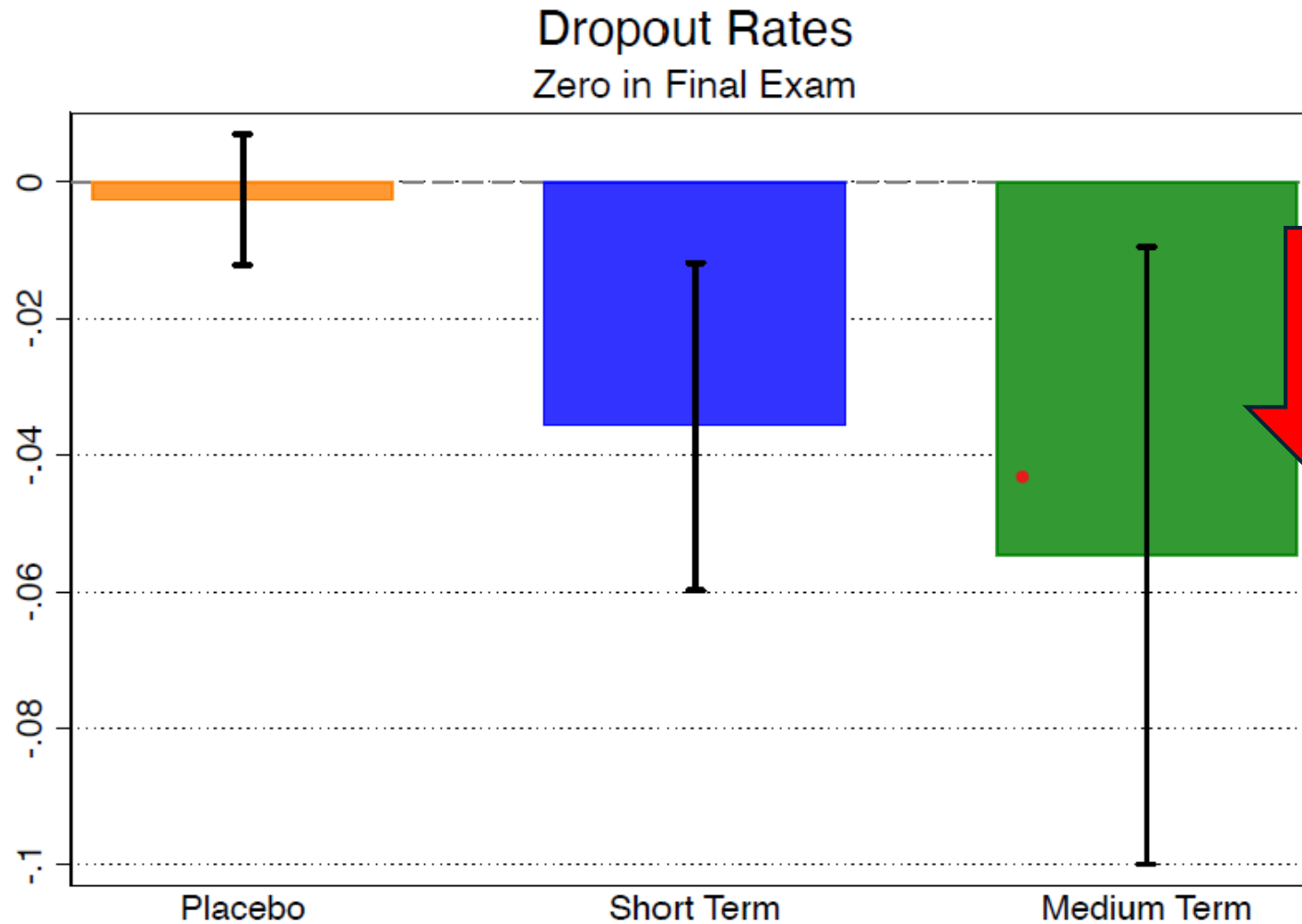
# Improving Management, Reduces Dropouts

Dropout Rates



3 percentage points, on that same year.

# The Impact Persists in the Medium-Term

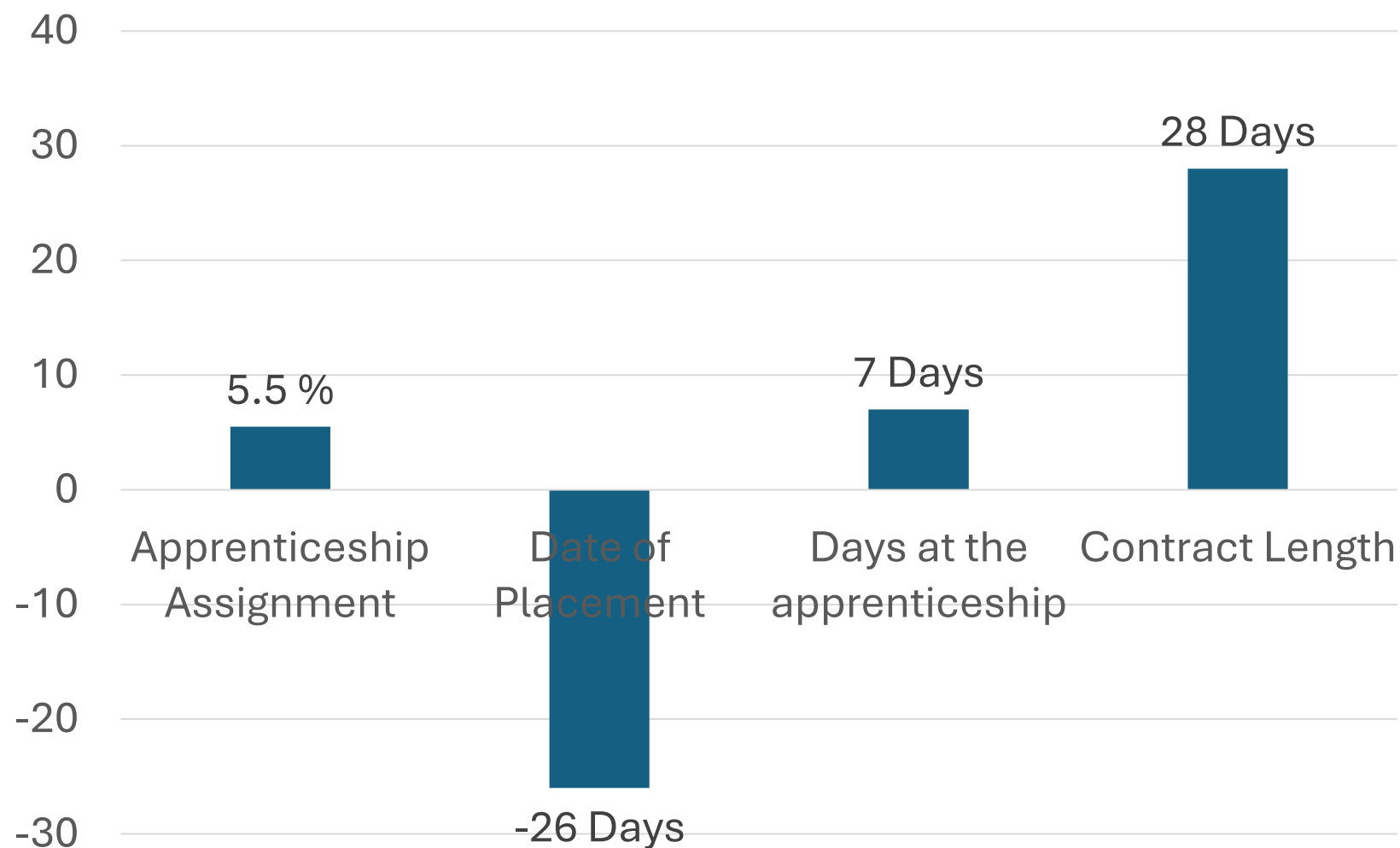


5 percentage points, after two years.

# What explains these findings?



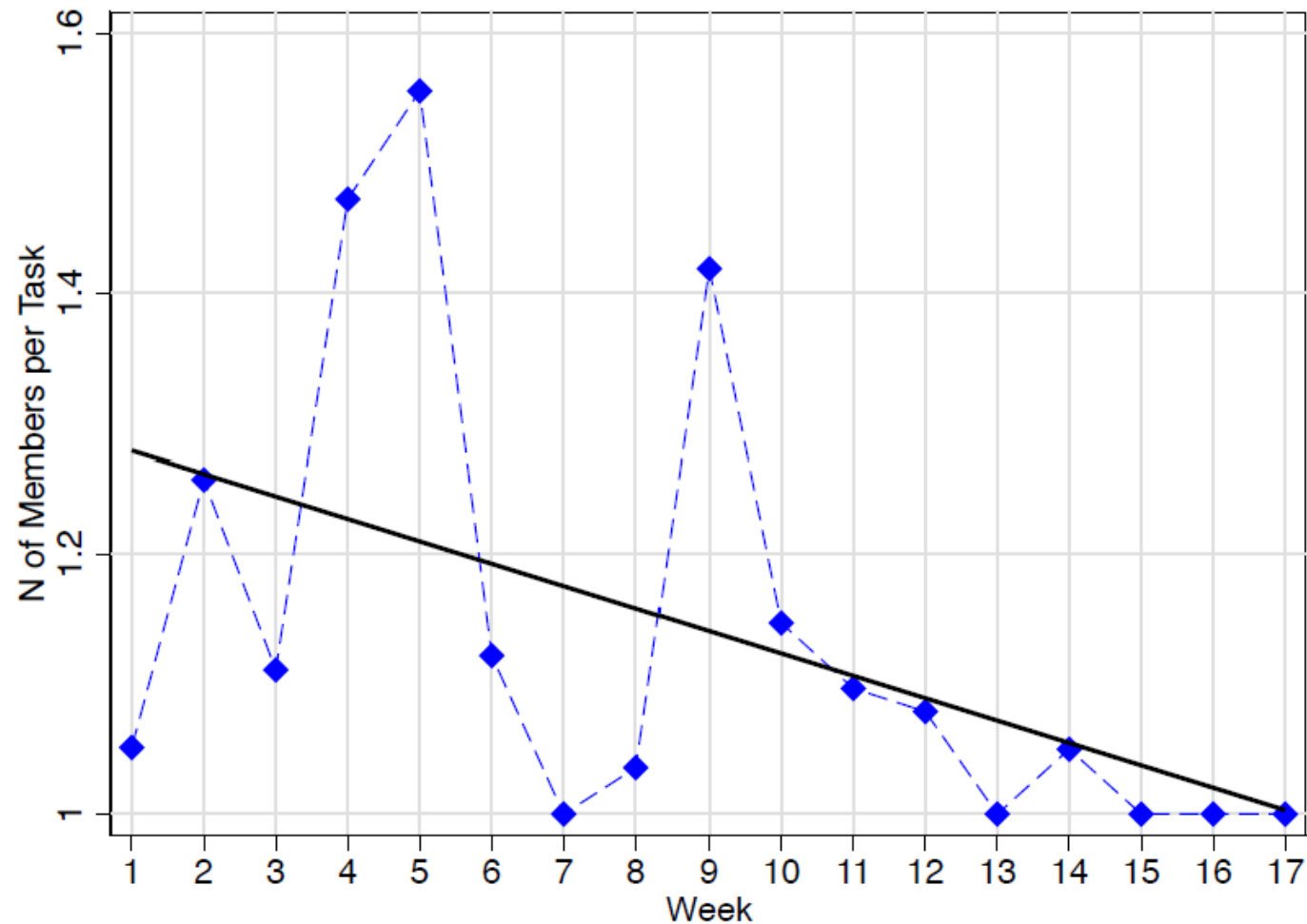
## **Reason 1:** Treated Schools were more efficient in placing students in an apprenticeship.



**\*All results statistically significant**



**Reason 2:** Staff in treated schools had better defined roles and responsibilities.



# Conclusions

1. The available administrative data can be used in a more efficient way to improve the delivery of social services.
2. But social service providers need technical support.
3. “Trial-and-adopt” can help us:
  - Ensure that the investments and intervention (in this case TSI-financed) are achieving its purpose.
  - Identify the mechanisms improving the quality of services.

# Thank you!

Rafa de Hoyos  
Human Development  
World Bank

