



Strategic Impact
Evaluation Fund

NEWSLETTER

September 2018

Featured evaluation

Kenya: Leveling the education playing field for rural children

Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, many children read below grade level and part of the problem is that they don't acquire the right skills before they start school. A SIEF supported study in rural Kenya is testing the impact on school readiness of a program that produces and distributes children's storybooks to households with children between ages two and six. [Read the baseline report here.](#)



Featured blog

Excuse me, can anyone tell me the cost of this education program?

What does a program cost? Too often, when evaluating a specific intervention, we don't collect the cost data needed to accurately do any costing analysis. SIEF is developing guidance for improving cost capture for interventions in the human development sectors. We recently went to Bangladesh to cost a program offering an additional year of pre-primary education. We found that the program's true cost was five times as much as the initial estimate made by the program's implementer based off their initial budget data. [Read the full blog here.](#)



SIEF in the news

Berk Ozler, a World Bank economist and a [SIEF researcher](#), recently spoke to the American television program [PBS NewsHour](#) about the effectiveness of giving poor people cash – without attaching any conditions. “I think we have more and more evidence that suggests that unless you have a very good reason to give people something else, you should give them cash instead,” said Ozler, who was the first to test the impact of conditional versus unconditional cash transfers in a [SIEF study in Malawi](#). But in a [National](#)

[Public Radio report](#), Ozler cautioned against thinking that cash aid can solve everything. Follow-up studies of cash programs, [including the one he ran in Malawi](#), often don't show that their short-term positive impacts continue after the money stops.

Speaking of cash, a recent [Vox blog](#) highlights a 9 year follow-up to a study in Uganda that SIEF had [supported](#) that had found high impacts on business assets, work hours, and earnings four years after young men and women were given cash grants to use for vocational training and to cover the start-up costs for small businesses. Nine years later, while assets were still higher among the grant recipients, their incomes and earnings were no higher than what could be observed in the control group.

Private doctors in India often misdiagnose tuberculosis, according to a new study in [PLOS Medicine](#), leading to inadequate treatment that can further the spread of the disease. World Bank economist and [SIEF researcher](#) Jishnu Das, who was part of the study, told the [global news agency AFP](#) that the haphazard methods doctors were following can harm patients and boost antibiotic resistance, making it harder to treat infections later on.

