



Strategic Impact
Evaluation Fund

NEWSLETTER

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Can phone calls to beneficiaries improve service delivery?

Prior to SIEF's [new nimble evaluation call for proposals](#), we funded a few demonstration evaluations. One was in India, where [Karthik Muralidharan](#), [Paul Niehaus](#), [Sandip Sukhtankar](#), and [Jeffrey Weaver](#) evaluated the impact of using phone calls to monitor a program that transferred nearly a billion dollars to farmers in the Indian state of Telangana ([NBER working paper](#)). Randomly selected officials were told that farmers eligible for the lump-sum payments in their jurisdictions would be called and asked if they received the money. Because beneficiaries received the money through special-purpose checks, researchers could confirm receipt by using bank records showing if the checks were cashed. Monitoring led to a 1.5 percent increase in the number of farmers receiving their benefits. The program cost 3.6 cents for each additional dollar delivered, which is lower than the administrative costs of most anti-poverty programs.

New Evidence to Policy note

Most teachers in preprimary programs in Ghana have little or no training, and parents expect their young children to get homework rather than learn through play and activities. To test how to successfully restructure early education in private and government programs, researchers worked with government and other partners on a training program to encourage teachers to use a play-based, child-centered curriculum and create a positive classroom environment. Read our [new Evidence to Policy note](#) on the evaluation.



Data training for journalists in Latin America

What are the main issues in education that journalists should consider when doing stories and how can impact evaluation evidence help? SIEF sponsored a one-day training for journalists from Latin America to explore how impact evaluation evidence – and data more broadly – can strengthen reporting, with a focus on education and its role in building human capital.

[Read more here](#)



Blogs

SIEF researchers [Orazio Attanasio](#), a professor at University College London, [Marta Rubio-Codina](#), an Inter-American Development Bank economist, and Costas Meghir, an economist at Yale University, contributed to a [blog on an impact evaluation](#) in Colombia that showed that integrating an early childhood stimulation and nutrition program into an existing government program for poor families led to gains in child development, including a reduction in stunting. The three researchers are all involved in a [SIEF-supported evaluation in India](#), testing a parenting program twinned with nutrition information.

Marta Rubio-Codina also was [co-author on a blog](#) about a new initiative to develop population-level indicators of early child development that are [valid, sensitive, and feasible](#) to measure at scale – and also comparable across countries and groups within a country.

