

A Nobel for RCTs

This month the Nobel Prize in Economics for 2019 went to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Michael Kremer for their "experimental approach to alleviating global poverty." The [press release](#) summarizes the importance of their work for both research and for policy design, and the Nobel Committee's [paper providing the scientific background](#) for their decision provides more detail. It was this movement of experimentally testing policies that led to funds like SIEF, and over the years, SIEF has supported three experiments in Kenya by Michael Kremer and others on [vouchers for vocational training](#), [scholarships to BRIDGE schools](#), and [teacher assignment algorithms](#).

SIEF Program Manager Alaka Holla [blogged](#) about the policy footprint of RCTs.

What happens when parents read with their children

In many low-income settings, most children have no books in their homes, which hampers their school readiness and puts them at a disadvantage compared to more affluent children, even before they enter primary school. In a SIEF seminar, Center for Global Development Senior Fellow Pamela Jakiela and World Bank economist Owen Ozier discussed findings from [the EMERGE study](#) in Kenya, where families received children's storybooks and various degrees of training for parents – even those who could not read – to engage in reading activities with children. For pilot results and their plans for the end line analysis, please see the [video](#) and [slides](#) of their presentation.



Tackling malnutrition

Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world, and approximately half of all children under the age of 5 are moderately or severely stunted. SIEF supported researcher Emanuela Galasso presented findings from a series of quasi-experimental and [experimental evaluations](#) designed to test the impact of different approaches to improve children's development, including door-to-door nutrition counselling, door-to-door counseling on early stimulation, and lipid-based supplementation for children and mothers. For results, please see the [video](#) and [slides](#) of the presentation.

