

Lessons on measuring learning remotely

The pandemic forced many activities to be remote, including measurement in impact evaluations. In a recent [webinar](#), six SIEF-supported research teams from SIEF's [COVID-19 Emergency window](#) shared their experiences of collecting data and assessing learning by phone or online learning platforms, covering issues such as, assessment modes, response rates, and threats to validity. The webinar closes with a presentation on the validity of using phone-based learning assessments for different purposes, such as impact evaluations and system level monitoring.

Monitoring child growth in the home

Stunting remains a major global public health challenge. A majority of the world's stunted children live in South Asia. Through its [nimble evaluation funding window](#), SIEF supported the [evaluation](#) of an in-home growth monitoring program in Pakistan, where 36 percent of children under five years of age are stunted. In a [recent webinar](#), researchers presented evaluation findings, following a discussion of the operational context of the World Bank's work in health and nutrition in Pakistan. Keeping it simple – growth monitoring in the home by community health workers – proved to be just as effective in reducing stunting as intervention variants with more components, such as growth charts for families to hang on the wall and small cash incentives. The research team also unveiled a simplified growth chart for families to use to assess whether their children are stunted, which they are currently testing in a pilot.



When was the earliest experiment?

Most of the impact evaluations in the SIEF portfolio are randomized controlled trials; they are experiments. Is this a method that is relatively new? Certainly not. In a fascinating [paper](#), Julian Jamison documents the history of randomized assignment in the medical and social sciences and includes examples as far back as the 18th century. More recently, a [video](#) in the *Be Smart* video series traces the experimental method more generally back to Ibn al-Haytham, a first century (yes!) mathematician and scientist from present day Iraq, who according to legend conducted his first experiments while imprisoned in Egypt.

