

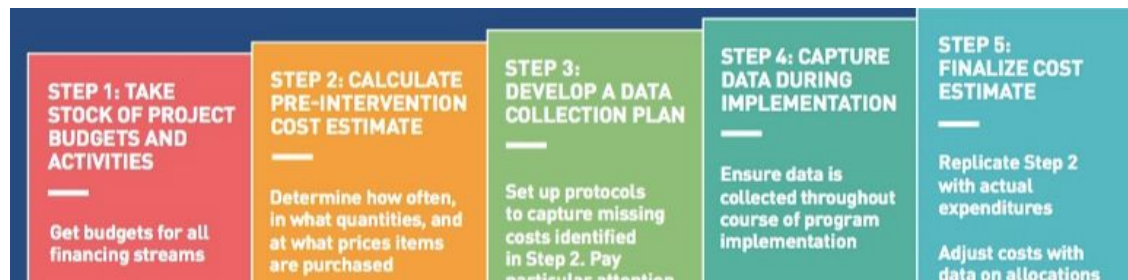
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NEWSLETTER
March 2019

The ABCs of Costing

Policymakers and implementing agencies face budget constraints. To make informed decisions about allocating scarce resources, they need to know both about an intervention's effectiveness *and its costs*. However, despite consensus on the utility of cost estimates, it is rare to see publicly available cost data or estimates of program cost that go beyond back-of-the-envelope calculations. Together with the International Rescue Committee, SIEF has produced a [short guidance note](#) to outline the basic steps required to capture cost data of interventions. SIEF plans to produce a more detailed guidance note in the next fiscal year.



Our seminars

Private schools that cater to low-income students serve a large share of the education market in some parts of Pakistan. Many of these private schools, often owned by local entrepreneurs, lack the resources and incentives to expand or improve quality and there usually are no loan products designed for these schools. What is the best way to relieve credit constraints of these types of schools? Does it make sense to encourage investors to target specific schools or should all schools in a market be targeted? SIEF-supported researchers conducted an experiment to test whether this made a difference. In one set of villages in Pakistan's Punjab province, all private schools received an unconditional cash grant. In another other set of villages, only one of the private schools in each village received the grant. While both approaches increased schools' investment in infrastructure, student learning improved only when all schools in a village received the grant, indicating

that the competition led them to make improvements that could improve school quality, such as paying teachers higher salaries.

Researcher [Jishnu Das](#), a World Bank economist, presented results from his SIEF funded [evaluation](#) at a World Bank seminar. [Read the paper.](#) [Watch the video.](#)



Researchers and practitioners alike are increasingly concerned about the sustainability of services established using donor funding. [SIEF-supported researchers](#) are studying the continued viability of early childhood education centers established in Indonesia under a large-scale donor-funded project and the impact on children's development. They found that the majority of centers continued to provide preschool services after the donor-funding ended and they have drawn actionable lessons that can be taken into account when considering the design and sustainability of future preschool projects.

Researcher [Amer Hasan](#), a World Bank economist, presented results from his SIEF funded [evaluation](#) at a World Bank seminar. [Read the papers on our website.](#) [Watch the video.](#)

Featured nimble evaluation

SIEF now supports [20 “nimble” evaluations](#) – rapid, low-cost randomized control trials designed to produce information policymakers can use immediately. For example, in Azerbaijan, public health spending cannot keep up with people's needs and out of pocket medical expenses are high. In 2017, the Government of Azerbaijan launched a mandatory health insurance pilot, and in 2018 the President issued a decree to expand mandatory health insurance nationwide. Using administrative data, SIEF supported researchers are working with the government to test different approaches to encourage people to sign up for this new health insurance system. Visit [this page](#) to read more.



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