

System-level approaches to improve online learning in Ecuador

A key concern with online learning – before, during, and after the pandemic – is sustaining active participation and lesson completion by students. In a series of [experiments](#) supported by SIEF’s [nimble](#) and [COVID emergency](#) windows, researchers used a series of experiments at the student, teacher, and system levels to find the most (cost-) effective approaches to encourage student participation and learning in online course modules in entrepreneurial education, statistics and scientific thinking, and Spanish and English language. Findings were [recently published](#) in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Learning did not improve following interventions at the student level (lottery tickets for lesson completion, lottery tickets for lesson completion and obtaining a minimum score, encouragement messages, encouragement to plan completion, teaming up with a peer) or at the teacher level (emails benchmarking class performance across teachers, text reminders that online classes were being monitored and that teachers should encourage on-time course completion, and encouragement emails showcasing teachers whose students completed the course), though lottery tickets for lesson completion did increase study time. In contrast, the system-level intervention in which Ministry of Education personnel had access to a real-time management system and received weekly reports about each school’s participation generated improvements in student learning, compared to schools in which only teachers received information from the management system about their class.

Remote interventions to promote non-violent parenting in Jamaica

Globally, approximately 3 out of every 4 children between the ages of 2 and 4 regularly face violent discipline at home, despite its negative effects on their cognitive and social-emotional development. During early pandemic-related lockdowns, many studies documented increases in violence in the home. A SIEF-supported [evaluation](#) in the [COVID Recovery window](#) tested whether a ten-week virtually delivered program (text messages, data-free app with weekly content, and group parenting sessions) on positive parenting practices could decrease violence towards young children in Jamaica. A recent [paper](#), reports short- and medium-term findings. Immediately after the program, parents report reductions in both physical and psychological violence against their children, with effects persisting 9 months after the end of the program. Children also exhibited fewer emotional problems immediately after the program. While caregivers’ depression and anxiety and parental stress did not improve immediately, there were significant improvements 9 months later.

