



NEWSLETTER  
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### **How valuable is counselling for contraceptive take-up?**

Despite their effectiveness in preventing unintended pregnancies, take-up of long-acting reversible contraceptives remains low. A nimble [evaluation](#) supported by SIEF tested interventions that aimed to ease two potential barriers to contraceptive adoption – cost and information – in a hospital in Yaoundé, Cameroon. In a recent [working paper](#), researchers found that randomly offered discounts increased take-up by 50 percent. A counselling strategy that encouraged shared decision-making through a tablet-based app that used clients' characteristics to rank modern contraceptive methods tripled adoption at full price, raising it from 11 percent to 35 percent. Adding a discount to the counselling had no additional impact. Last year, World Bank researcher Berk Ozler presented preliminary results and the researchers' plan for iterative experimentation in a [SIEF seminar](#).

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### **Learning in the time of COVID**

Researchers have continued to track a sample of students in a SIEF-supported [evaluation](#) in Ghana that provided in-service training to teachers to adopt a more child-centered approach in the classroom. In a [recent paper](#), they document inequalities in access to and engagement in remote-learning activities when schools were closed in Ghana in 2020. Children in private schools and children in higher socioeconomic status households engaged in remote learning at higher rates and received more support from their schools and caregivers. There is also some evidence of widening inequalities in literacy and math scores. Stay tuned for additional research examining whether children who benefited from the teacher training when they were in preschool fared better during the COVID pandemic and for results from another SIEF-supported [evaluation](#) from our [COVID portfolio](#), testing the effectiveness of text messages to encourage learning activities and investment in girls' education at home during school closures.



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### Cost-effectiveness of a private school in Mexico

In Mexico, private schools offer a longer school day and more extracurricular and enrichment opportunities. Poor families, however, cannot afford to send their children there. In a recently published [paper](#) in the *International Journal of Educational Development*, researchers of a SIEF supported [evaluation](#) estimated the impacts and cost-effectiveness of offering poor children in Mexico City admission to a private school through a lottery. Compared to children not offered a slot through the lottery, children offered a slot gained an additional 0.18 standard deviations in literacy scores and 0.09 standard deviations in numeracy scores over the first three years of elementary school. These modest gains, however, required an additional \$1,000 per pupil per year over and above what is required in public schools, which suggests lottery-based admissions to the private school may not be cost-effective.



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