Presenting the evaluations of the COVID-19 Recovery Window

The Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund (SIEF) is pleased to announce the evaluation teams that will receive funding through SIEF’s COVID-19 recovery window. Continuing SIEF’s approach of matching scientifically rigorous research methods with pressing policy challenges, the focus of this sixth call for proposals is recovering human capital after the COVID pandemic.

**Bangladesh**

**Schools in Bangladesh should have computer labs under the Sheikh Russel Digital Labs (SRDL) program. This RCT has 3 arms to test whether these labs can be used to recover learning losses after the pandemic:**

1. **Lite treatment:** offline digital learning contents + ICT training for teachers; **(ii) Heavy treatment:** Lite treatment + lab classes are mandatory; **(iii) Control arm:** no intervention.

- Frequency of lab use and English and Math test scores.
- Students enrolled in lower and upper secondary schools with SRDLs.

- **Target group**:
  - Children aged between 2 and 6 years and their mothers who reside in rural south west Bangladesh.
  - Households eligible or nearly eligible for the emergency social protection program.
  - Labor market participation of household adults, food diversity, and childcare and school attendance.

- **Main outcomes**:
  - Children’s cognition, language, and numeracy; time spent engaging children in early stimulation, mother’s perceived stress and depression severity; and financial self-efficacy and saving.
  - Female entrepreneurs who report experiencing symptoms of mental distress.
  - Grade 9 students from rural households with lower socio-economic status.

- **Evaluation design**:
  - This RCT tests the impacts of 4 variants of tele-mentoring and/or tele-counselling sessions aiming to improve parental involvement in children’s development: (i) Weekly education and developmental support over the phone for mothers; (ii) Mental health and financial tele-counselling support for the mother; (iii) Combination of treatment arms (i) and (ii); (iv) Control arm: no intervention.

- **Team**:
  - Abu S. Shonchoy (Florida International University), Tomoki Fujii (Singapore Management University), Christine Ho (Singapore Management University), and Rohan Ray (National University of Singapore).
  - Xavier Gine (The World Bank), Alejandro de la Fuente (The World Bank), Hanan Jacoby (The World Bank), and José Antonio Pellerano (SIUBEN, Dominican Republic).
  - Naira Kaka (The World Bank), Adiam Hailmechel (The World Bank), Medhin Selamu (Addis Ababa University), and Lelys Dinarte-Diaz (The World Bank).
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**Dominican Republic**

**This quasi-experimental study uses a difference-in-differences and regression discontinuity design to assess the impact of the governance emergency package “Quédate en Casa” (“Stay at Home”) on human capital investments during the pandemic.**

- Labor market participation of household adults, food diversity, and childcare and school attendance.
- Mental health, intimate partner violence, and business performance.

- **Main outcomes**:
  - Children’s cognition, language, and numeracy; time spent engaging children in early stimulation, mother’s perceived stress and depression severity; and financial self-efficacy and saving.
  - Children aged between 2 and 6 years and their caregivers.

- **Evaluation design**:
  - This RCT tests the impacts of 4 variants of tele-mentoring and/or tele-counselling sessions aiming to improve parental involvement in children’s development: (i) Weekly education and developmental support over the phone for mothers; (ii) Mental health and financial tele-counselling support for the mother; (iii) Combination of treatment arms (i) and (ii); (iv) Control arm: no intervention.

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**Ethiopia**

**This RCT tests the impacts of phone-based mental health counselling for female small-business owners by lay-workers based on the World Health Organization’s Doing what Matters in Times of Stress modules.**

- Mental health, intimate partner violence, and business performance.

- **Main outcomes**:
  - Children’s cognition, language, and numeracy; time spent engaging children in early stimulation, mother’s perceived stress and depression severity; and financial self-efficacy and saving.
  - Children aged between 2 and 6 years and their caregivers.

- **Evaluation design**:
  - This RCT tests the impacts of 4 variants of tele-mentoring and/or tele-counselling sessions aiming to improve parental involvement in children’s development: (i) Weekly education and developmental support over the phone for mothers; (ii) Mental health and financial tele-counselling support for the mother; (iii) Combination of treatment arms (i) and (ii); (iv) Control arm: no intervention.

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**Jamaica**

**This RCT tests the impacts of delivering educational podcasts with Math and English lessons in an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, an automated phone system technology that allows incoming callers to access information via pre-recorded messages without having to speak to a tutor.**

- Parental stress (cortisol) levels and self-reported, attitudes on violence against children, and violent discipline against children.

- **Main outcomes**:
  - Children’s cognition, language, and numeracy; time spent engaging children in early stimulation, mother’s perceived stress and depression severity; and financial self-efficacy and saving.
  - Children aged between 2 and 6 years and their caregivers.

- **Evaluation design**:
  - This RCT tests the impacts of 4 variants of tele-mentoring and/or tele-counselling sessions aiming to improve parental involvement in children’s development: (i) Weekly education and developmental support over the phone for mothers; (ii) Mental health and financial tele-counselling support for the mother; (iii) Combination of treatment arms (i) and (ii); (iv) Control arm: no intervention.

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**Nepal and Pakistan**

**This RCT tests the impacts of delivering educational podcasts with Math and English lessons in an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, an automated phone system technology that allows incoming callers to access information via pre-recorded messages without having to speak to a tutor.**

- Students’ learning, aspirations, and time spent on exam preparation.

- **Main outcomes**:
  - Children’s cognition, language, and numeracy; time spent engaging children in early stimulation, mother’s perceived stress and depression severity; and financial self-efficacy and saving.
  - Children aged between 2 and 6 years and their caregivers.

- **Evaluation design**:
  - This RCT tests the impacts of 4 variants of tele-mentoring and/or tele-counselling sessions aiming to improve parental involvement in children’s development: (i) Weekly education and developmental support over the phone for mothers; (ii) Mental health and financial tele-counselling support for the mother; (iii) Combination of treatment arms (i) and (ii); (iv) Control arm: no intervention.

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**Ukraine**

**Randomized control trial testing This RCT tests the impact of instructional tutoring offering supplemental learning in math, Ukrainian language, and Ukrainian history and psychosocial support, for six hours a week by paid-for tutors working for Teach for Ukraine through the Edmodo online platform.**

- Achievement in math, Ukrainian Language and Ukrainian History; social-emotional skills; anxiety and stress; and educational goals.

- **Main outcomes**:
  - Ukrainian students in grades 5 to 10 who are seeking supplemental support beyond the standard online schooling schedule.

- **Evaluation design**:
  - This RCT tests the impacts of 4 variants of tele-mentoring and/or tele-counselling sessions aiming to improve parental involvement in children’s development: (i) Weekly education and developmental support over the phone for mothers; (ii) Mental health and financial tele-counselling support for the mother; (iii) Combination of treatment arms (i) and (ii); (iv) Control arm: no intervention.

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