



Strategic Impact  
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## Massive impacts of standardizing education

Before the COVID pandemic, more than half of children in low- and middle-income countries suffered from learning poverty: they either were out of school or failed to learn to read with comprehension by age 10. Previous research has shown that highly structured teaching guides could improve literacy, but scripted lessons are not without critics, who worry that teachers will not be able to adapt content to student's needs. In places where teachers may be less prepared to tailor high quality lessons to their students, however, scripting may offer a way to standardize a minimum level of quality at scale. Recently researchers of a [SIEF-supported evaluation in Kenya](#) released a [working paper](#) documenting massive impacts of an attempt to codify and standardize many aspects of education, from pedagogy to management to school construction, in Bridge International Academies, a chain of for-profit schools. Taking advantage of a lottery to allocate scholarships to Bridge schools, researchers found test score gains over and above the control group equivalent to 1.48 years of learning (1.35 standard deviations) among the study's preprimary sample and 0.89 years of learning (0.81 standard deviations) among primary school students. These gains are among the largest observed in the international education literature, and additional findings are summarized in a [brief](#) recently published alongside the working paper.

## SIEF's 6<sup>th</sup> Call for Proposals on COVID Recovery

Last month, SIEF launched its [sixth call for proposals](#) focused on efforts to recover human capital following the COVID pandemic. The losses documented across the lifecycle, from early malnutrition to learning losses to potential labor market scarring among youth, have been enormous, and thus the need for remedies is urgent. This call for proposals will prioritize evaluations of interventions that have the potential for high impact within a short amount of time. [Short applications](#) from researchers are due June 17. Researchers with successful short applications will submit full proposals together with World Bank task team leaders by September 2, and final decisions on funding will be made in early October.

