SIEF in the Himalayas: Evaluating the Impact of Education and Health Policy in Nepal

- More than 50 Nepali policymakers, academics and representatives of local NGOs came together last month for a four-day SIEF workshop in Kathmandu on how to use impact evaluation for better policymaking and program design. "Impact evaluation provides you with evidence of which of the policy options will deliver the results you are looking for," said Dr. Tulasi Prasad Thapaliya, Joint Secretary in the Nepal Ministry of Education.
- In parallel, SIEF partnered with the UN Foundation for an additional workshop for more than a dozen Nepali journalists on data and development and how to use numbers to tell a story. "I now realize that all the before and after comparisons that organizations do aren't giving us the full story," said Amardhoj Lama, a reporter for Radio Nepal.

Teacher training programs are popular - but do we know which ones work?

- Teacher training programs abound, but the models vary: some last for a year, others for just two weeks, while some train teachers in a specific subject and others focus on teaching skills and pedagogy. But which is most effective?
- SIEF-supported researchers Anna Popova, David Evans and Violeta Arancibia categorized impact evaluations of in-service teacher training programs and determined which traits increased students' test scores. The results, outlined in paper Trainings Teachers on the Job: What Works and How to Measure It and a related blog, highlight the need for more reporting on the interventions themselves - so that researchers can be more systematic in their search for what works and what doesn't in teacher training programs.
Featured evaluation: The impact of information and cash on early childhood development in Nepal

- In Nepal, which has one of the highest rates of malnutrition and stunting in the world, SIEF researchers worked with the Government to evaluate different strategies for improving child development at scale. They tested whether a program that provides information about nutrition and parenting during community meetings could be improved with five small cash payments. Information provision improved mothers' knowledge of nutrition and healthy child development, but bigger improvements were seen in communities that received both information and cash, where children also showed improvement in fine and gross motor skills.

SIEF on the Road

- SIEF manager Alaka Holla was in Atlanta last month to present at the annual meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES).