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NEWSLETTER
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Checking in on targeted instruction

Small-scale randomized control trials suggest that targeted instruction – dividing students by learning level rather than by grade for an hour or more per day – has the potential to improve student learning. SIEF has been supporting an [evaluation](#) of a scale-up of targeted instruction in primary schools in Ghana. Researchers recently made spot visits to check on the implementation of the program and to measure student and teacher attendance, information that will be useful when interpreting end line results. Their [field report](#) suggests sizeable changes in classrooms. Students were divided into levels in nearly 60 percent of treatment schools, a practice that was not observed in any control schools. Teachers in treatment schools were around 15 percent more likely to be in the classroom for the duration of class and 15 percent more likely to be engaged with students, compared to their peers in control schools.

Our latest Evidence to Policy Note

SIEF has released a [new Evidence to Policy note](#) about an [innovative evaluation in Pakistan](#), where researchers sought to determine how best to structure cash grants to support rural private schools serving low-income students. The research team tested two models: In some villages, all private school owners were given a grant; in other villages, only one private school owner in each village received the money. The [evaluation](#) found that all the schools that received the grant increased spending on school infrastructure, as compared with schools in the control group. But test scores increased only among students in private schools in villages where all the private schools had received grants. In these schools, the owners increased teachers' wages, which may have helped them attract better teachers. They also raised school fees, which helped increase their revenues.

The results indicate that improving access to finance may help schools make improvements that benefit students, while also raising their own profits. The research team is now evaluating the impact of new loan products for private schools that cater to low-income students in Punjab.



SIEF research in the news

The [Chicago Booth Review](#) highlighted findings of a SIEF supported [evaluation in India](#) that tested different approaches for increased tuberculosis detection in India. Identifying patients is one of the key barriers to treating highly contagious bacterial diseases like tuberculosis. To identify new patients, researchers experimented with offering small financial incentives to patients and health workers to conduct outreach to people suspected of suffering from TB. Not only were financial incentives effective at increasing referrals and identifying new TB cases, but [researchers found](#) that peer outreach by patients offered financial incentives led to higher rates of referral than outreach by health workers.

On the [Development Impact blog](#), Markus Goldstein [recently wrote](#) about a SIEF supported [evaluation in Rwanda](#) which tested whether advertising pay-for-performance schemes in job postings leads to hiring of better (or worse) teachers, or whether pay-for-performance motivates teachers to work harder after they're hired. The [researchers found](#) that advertising pay-for-performance did not lead schools to hire teachers with different skill levels, though it did increase teacher effort in a number of dimensions, which in turn led to marginally better test scores for students.

