

Evolution of Evaluation

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Rural Education Action Project (REAP)

My assignment:

“In particular, we would encourage you to reflect on how impact evaluation work in development has changed in the last decade.”

Some questions relevant to this topic include:

- Are more studies being conducted? [Q1] ✓
- Is the quality improving?
- How are the methods that are utilized changing over time? [Q2] ✓
- Is capacity growing in foreign aid agencies and developing countries?
- Are study findings making their way into policy decisions in developing countries and at organizations like the multilateral development banks? ✓
- What problems might be emerging in terms of ethics, capacity, quality of evidence, and dissemination or use? Q3

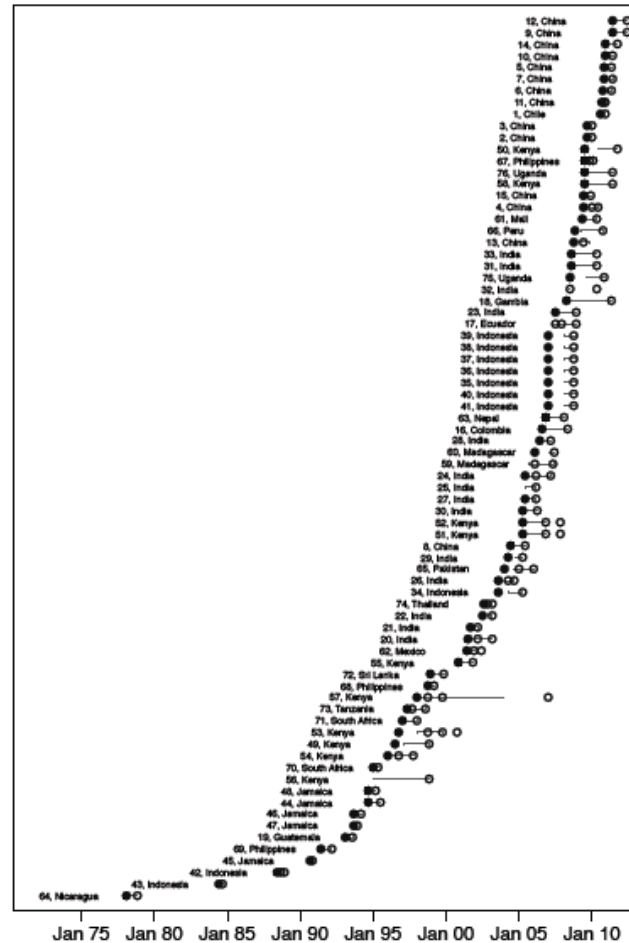
Q1: Are more studies being
conducted?

Improving Learning in Primary Schools of Developing Countries:
A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Experiments

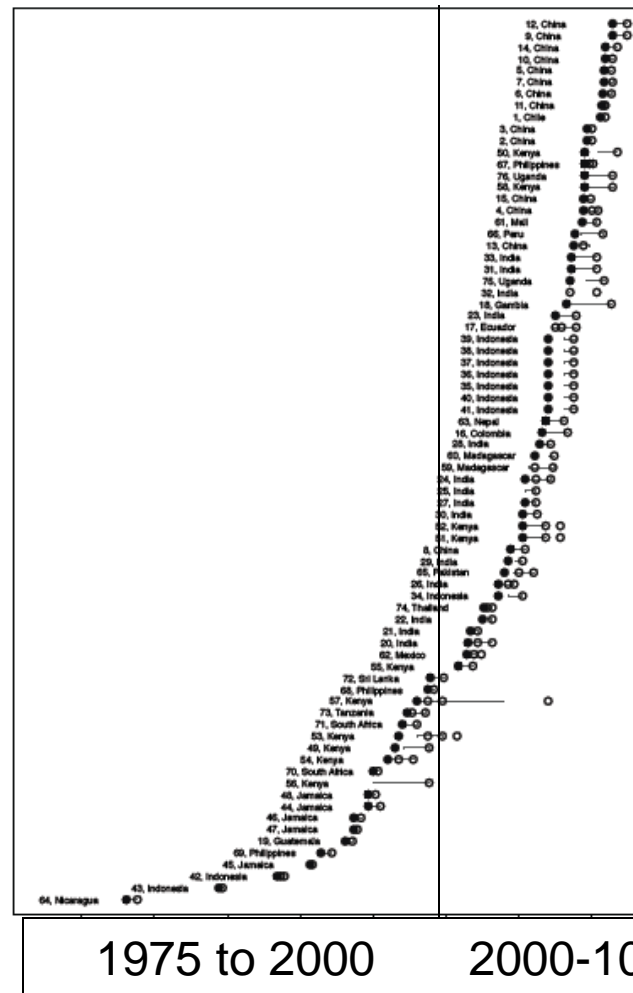
Patrick J. McEwan^{*}
Wellesley College

May 2013

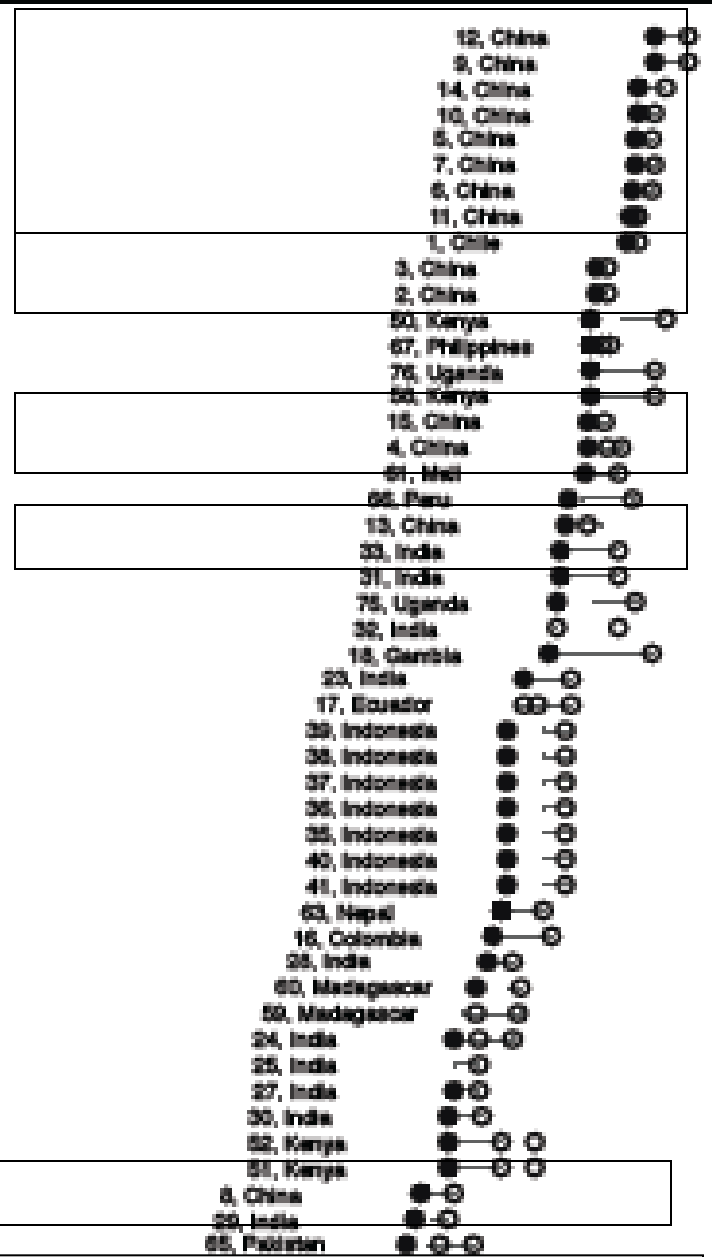
Dates of treatment and data collection in 76 “learning” experiments



Dates of treatment and data collection in 76 experiments



Twice as many studies on learning in the ten years after 2000 ... than in the 25 years before 2000



<2000

2003

2006

2009

2012

22, India

60

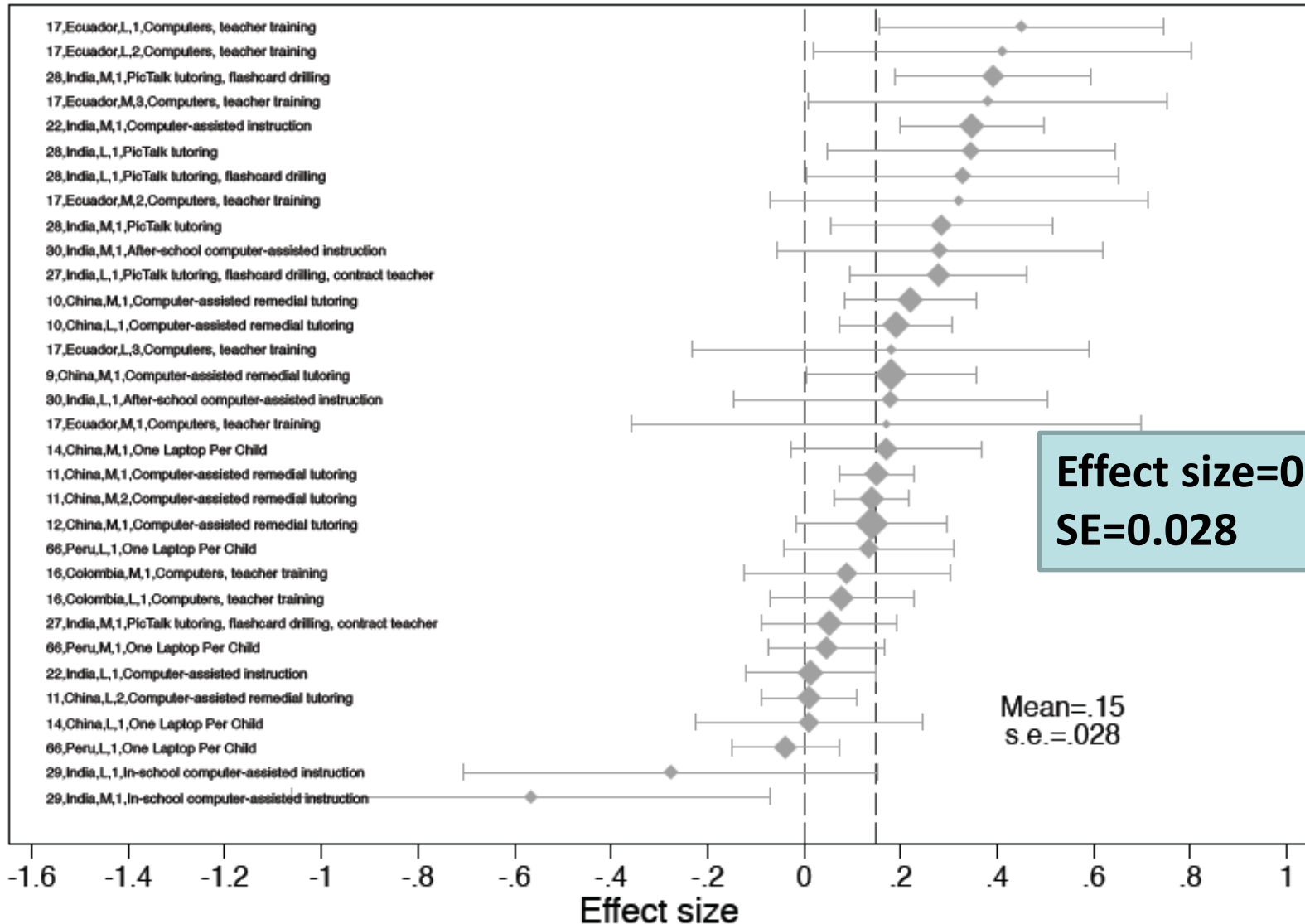
Treatm

r training

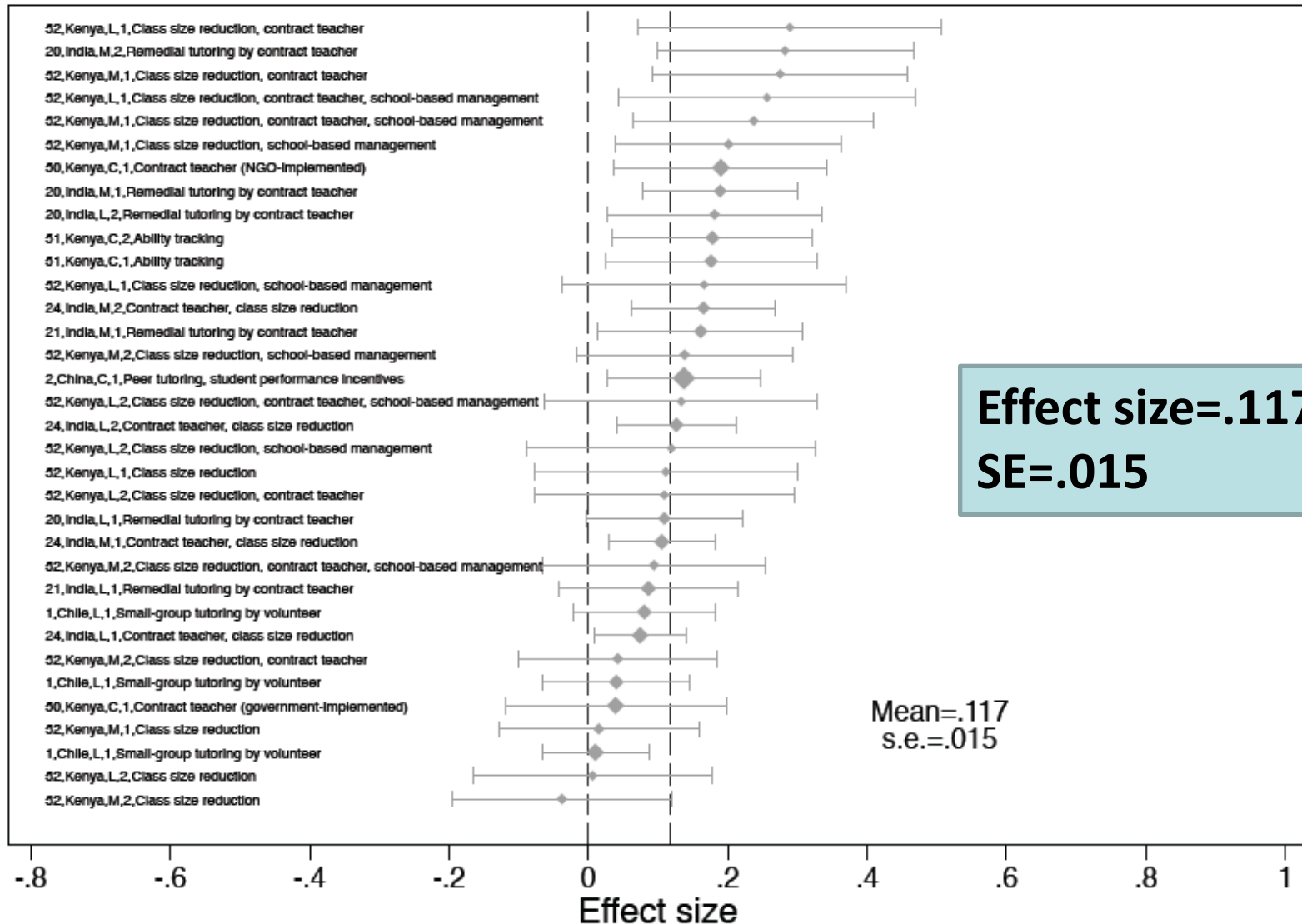


Effect size = .123
SE = .025

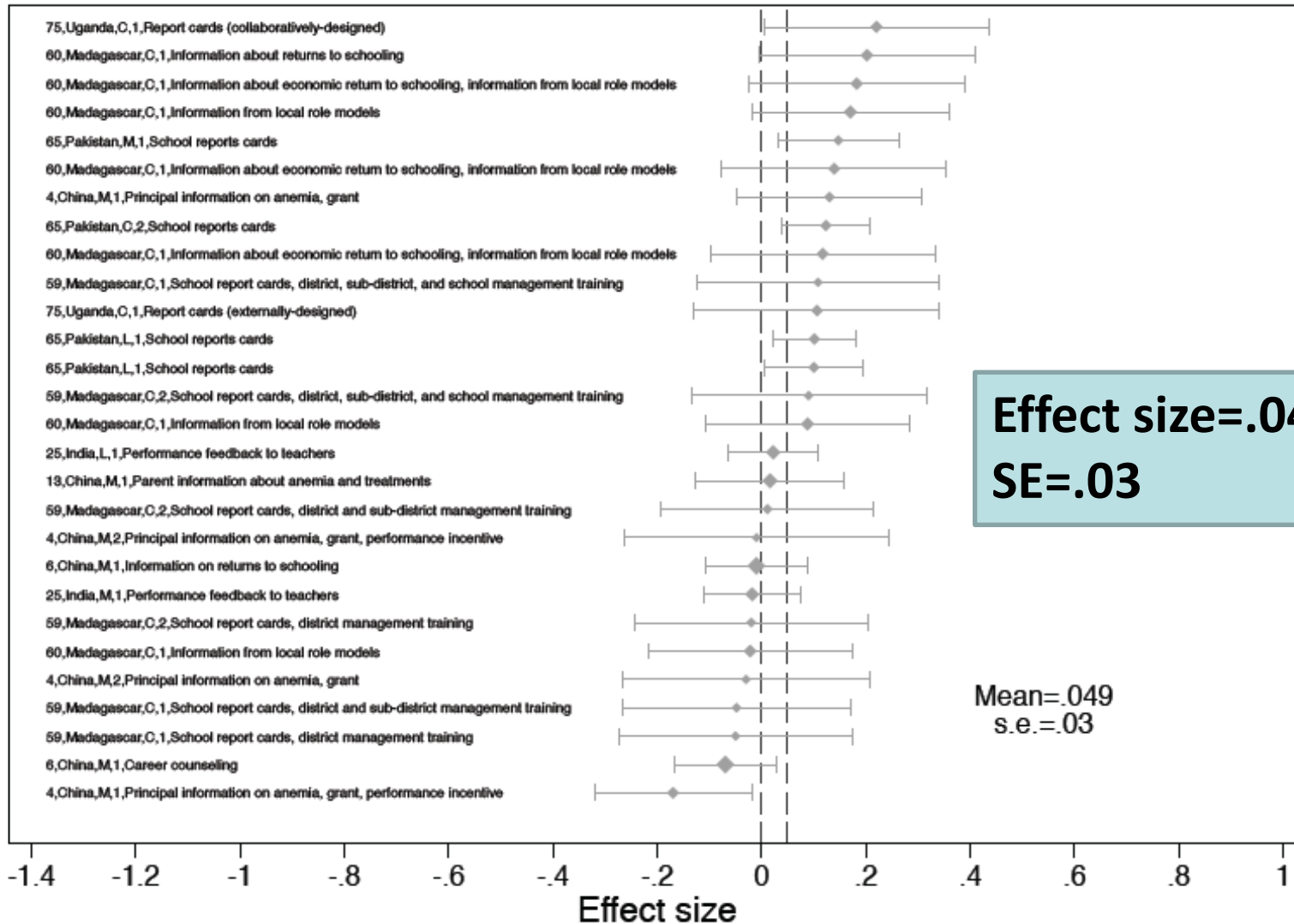
Treatments with computers or technology



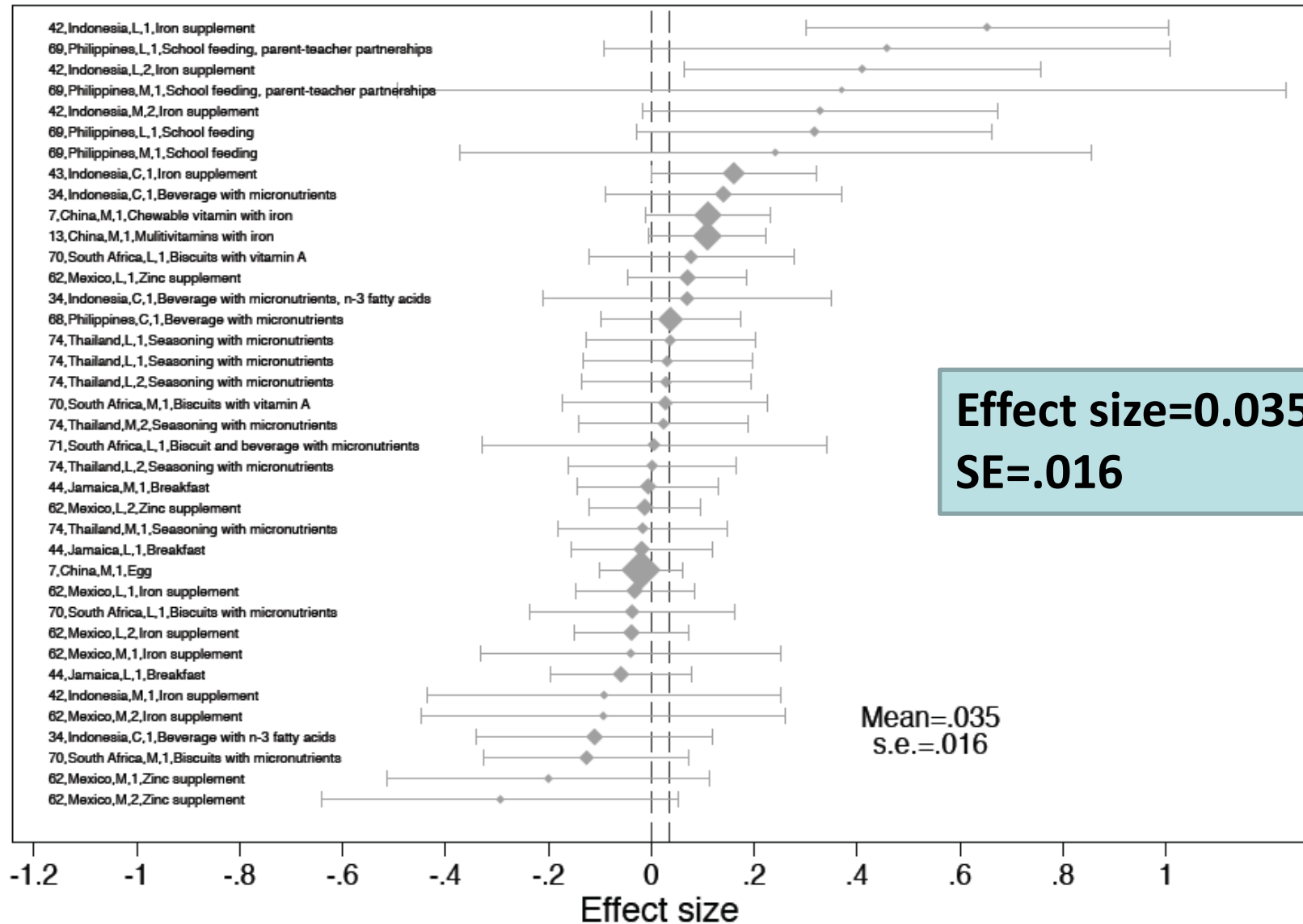
Treatments that modify class size, small-group instruction, or group composition



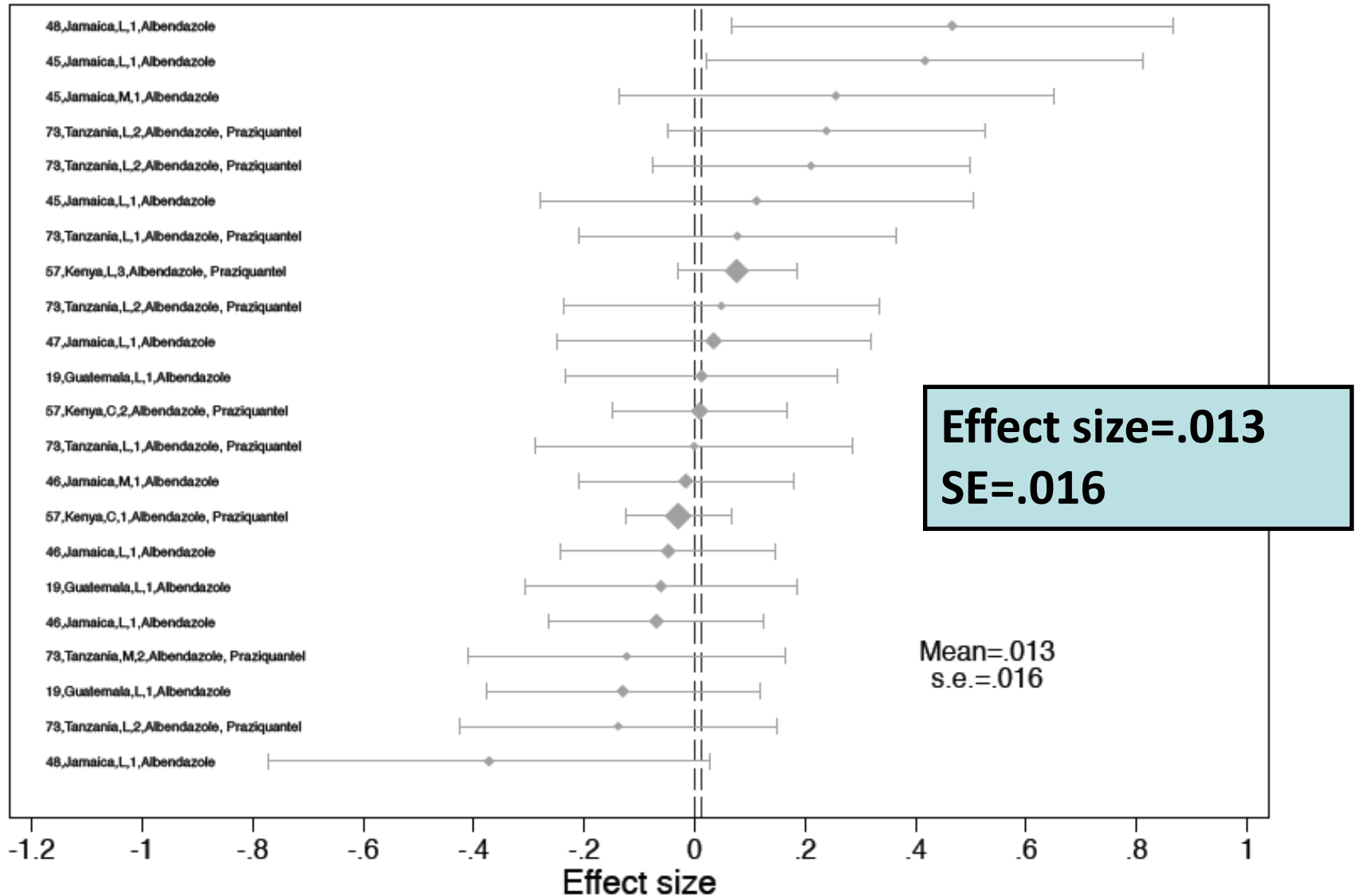
Treatments with information



Treatments with food, beverages, and/or micronutrients



Treatments with de-worming drugs



Are more studies being conducted?

Summary

- A lot more studies are being conducted ...
- Accelerating rate ...
[By the way: significant share supported by 3ie]
- We are beginning to learn about what works and what does not
 - Average size of effects are zero to small to medium sized
 - Large heterogeneity → by country / by type of intervention
- What works to bring kids into school / does not necessarily work to improve learning

Q2: How are the methods that are utilized changing over time?

Our first experiment in China

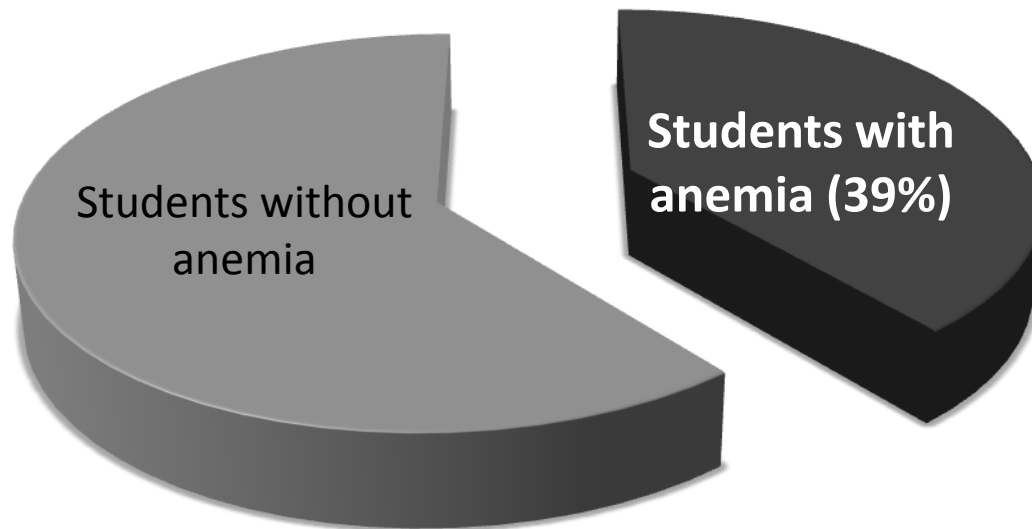
Pilot study: 2007

- Conducted a survey of 4158 fourth grade students in nine counties in rural Shaanxi province
- Tested students' hemoglobin levels

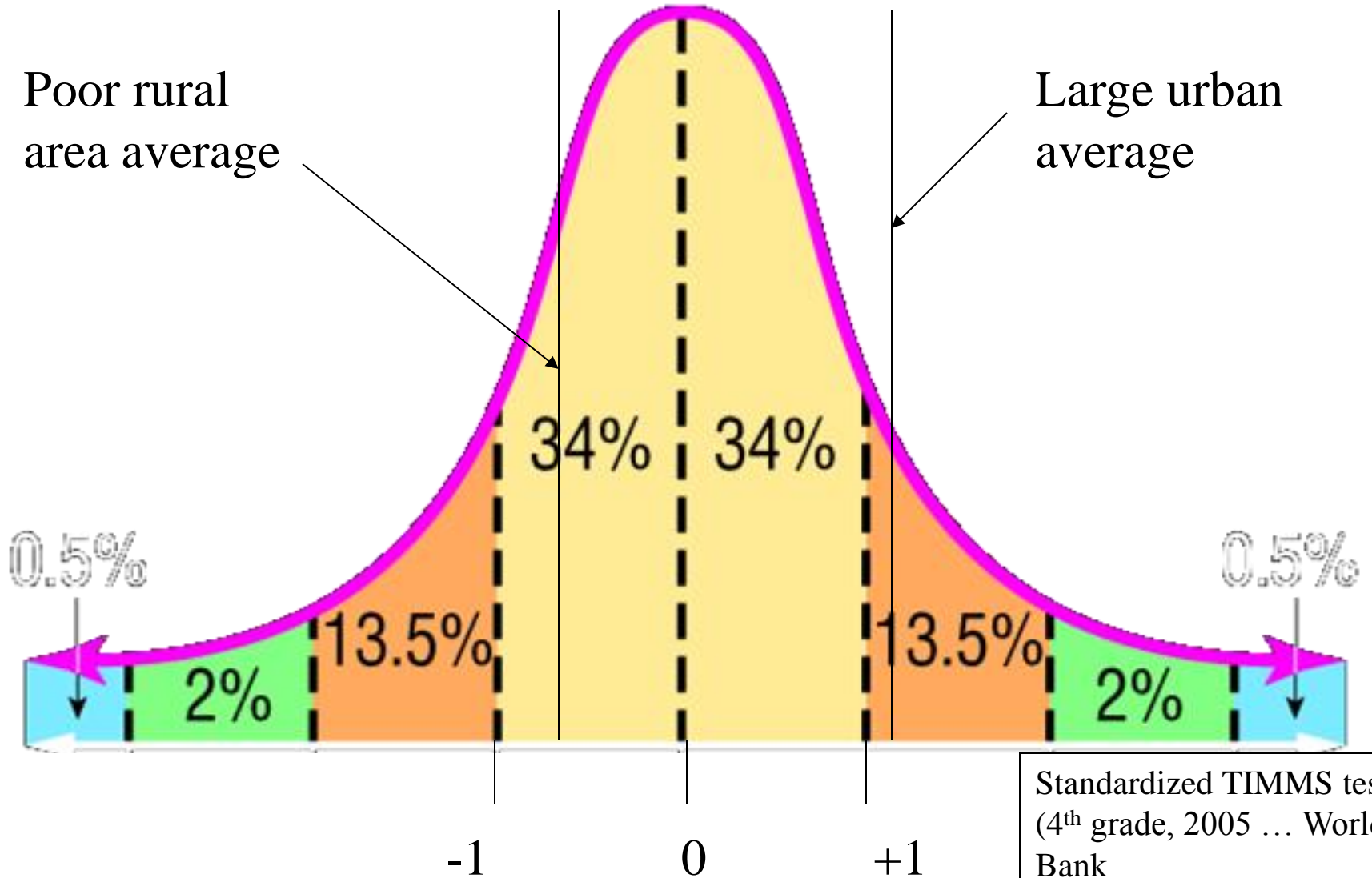


Initial Results

- Found that 39% of students had anemia



In fact, students in poor rural areas are poor students!!



What can be done?

Will iron supplements → less anemia?

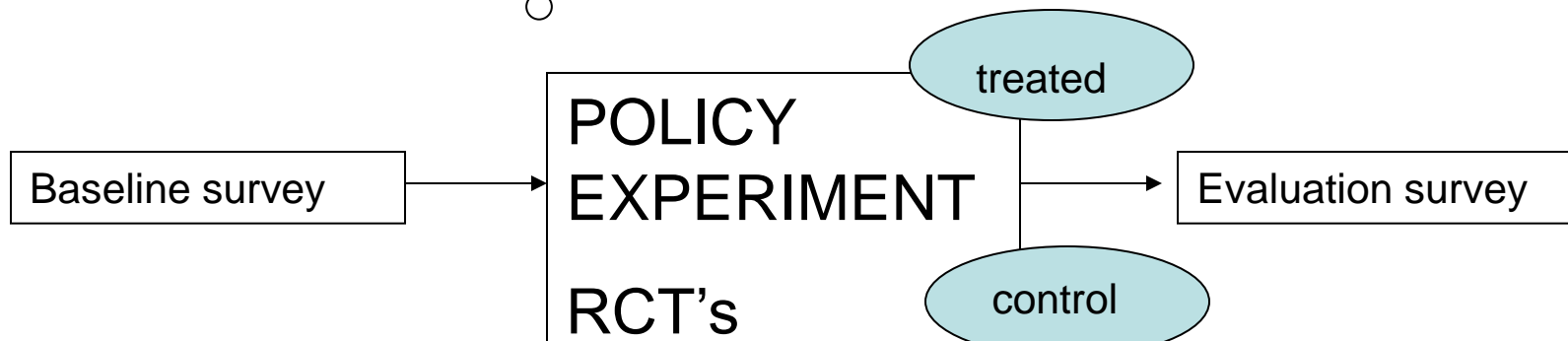
Lower anemia → Better school performance?

Baseline Survey (Oct. 2008):

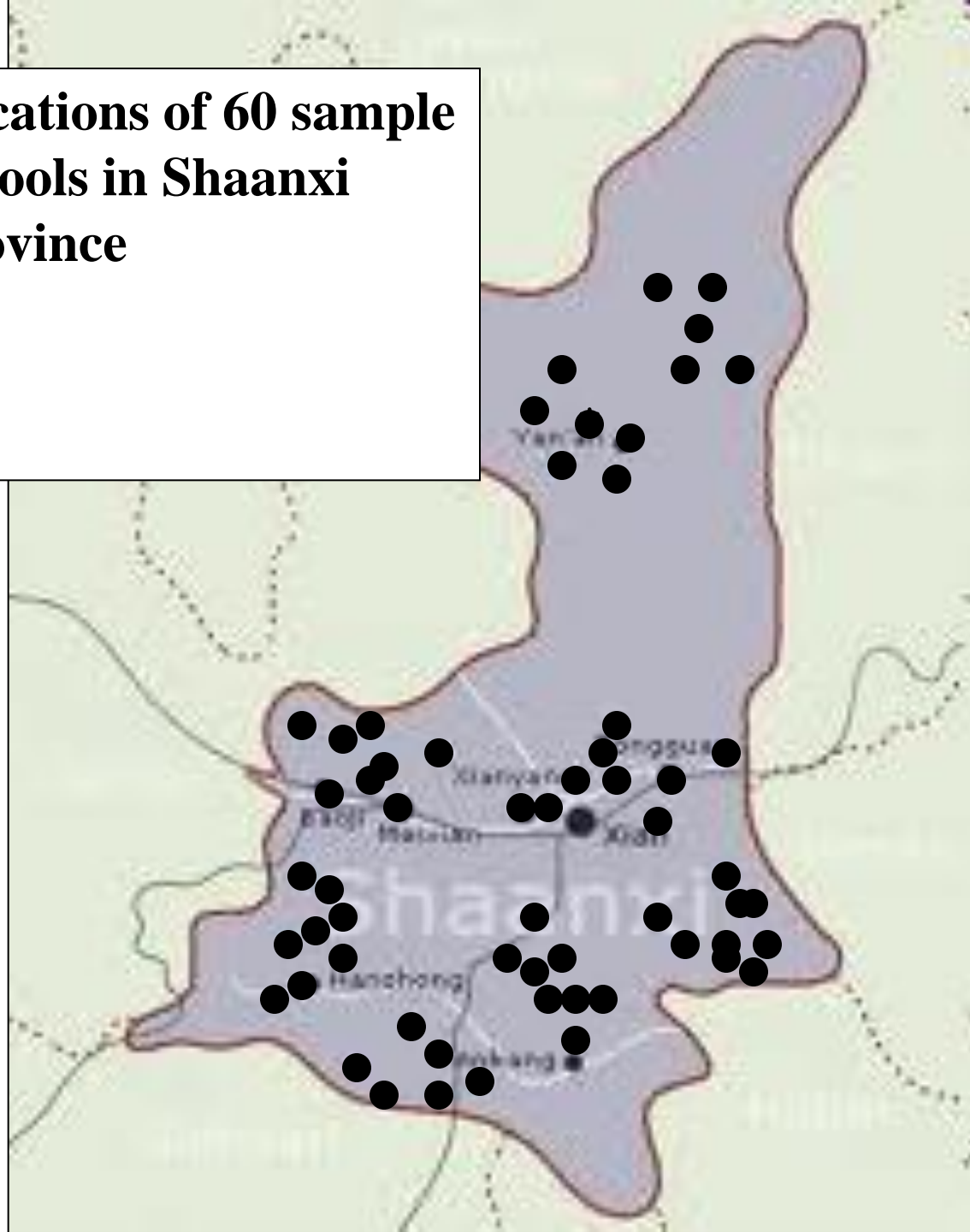
-- Anemia (Hb) Test

-- Standardized Math Test

Stage 1



Locations of 60 sample schools in Shaanxi Province

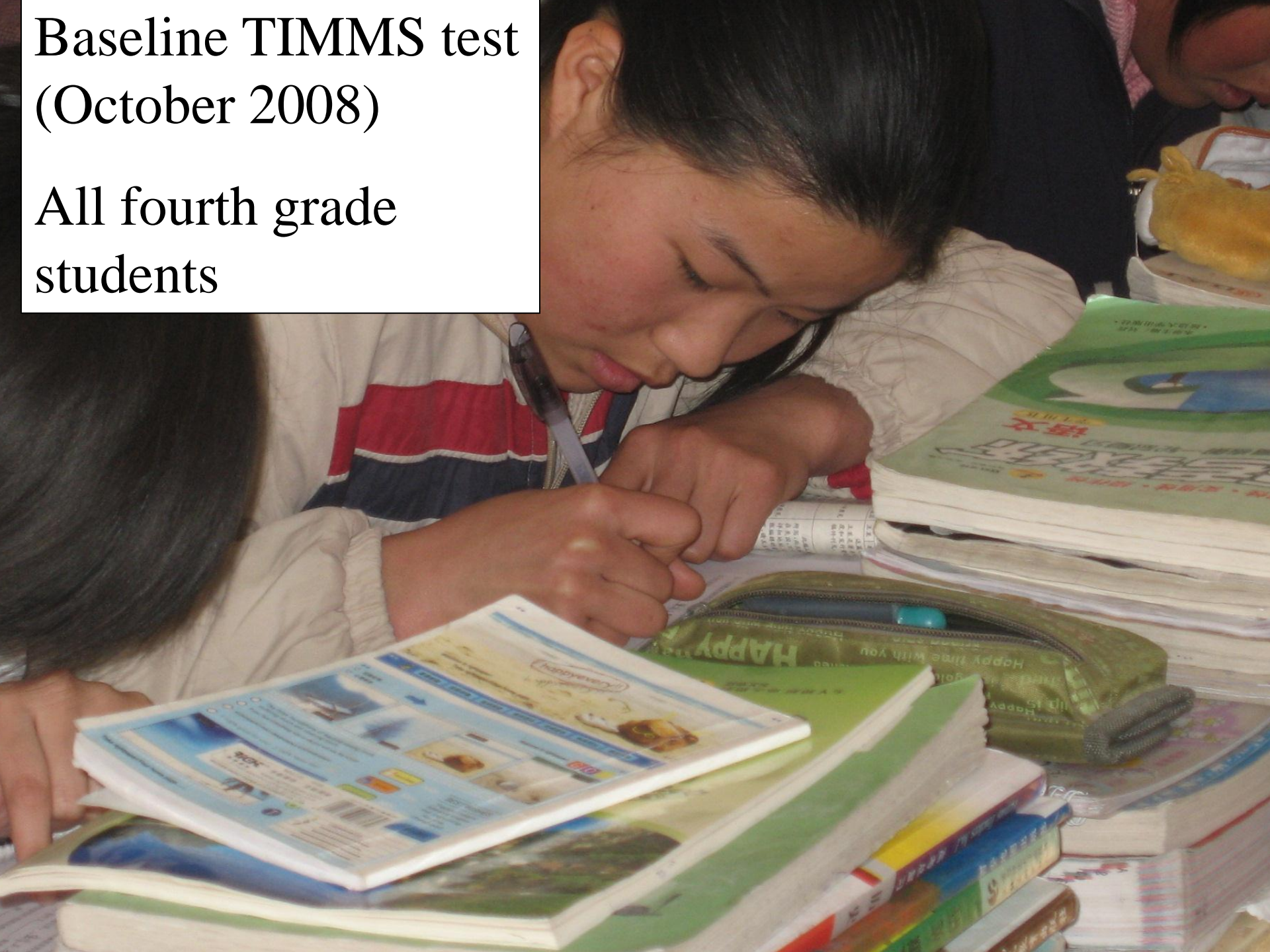


Using Hemocue 201+ technology gives Hb levels in 45 seconds (Oct. 2008)



Baseline TIMMS test
(October 2008)

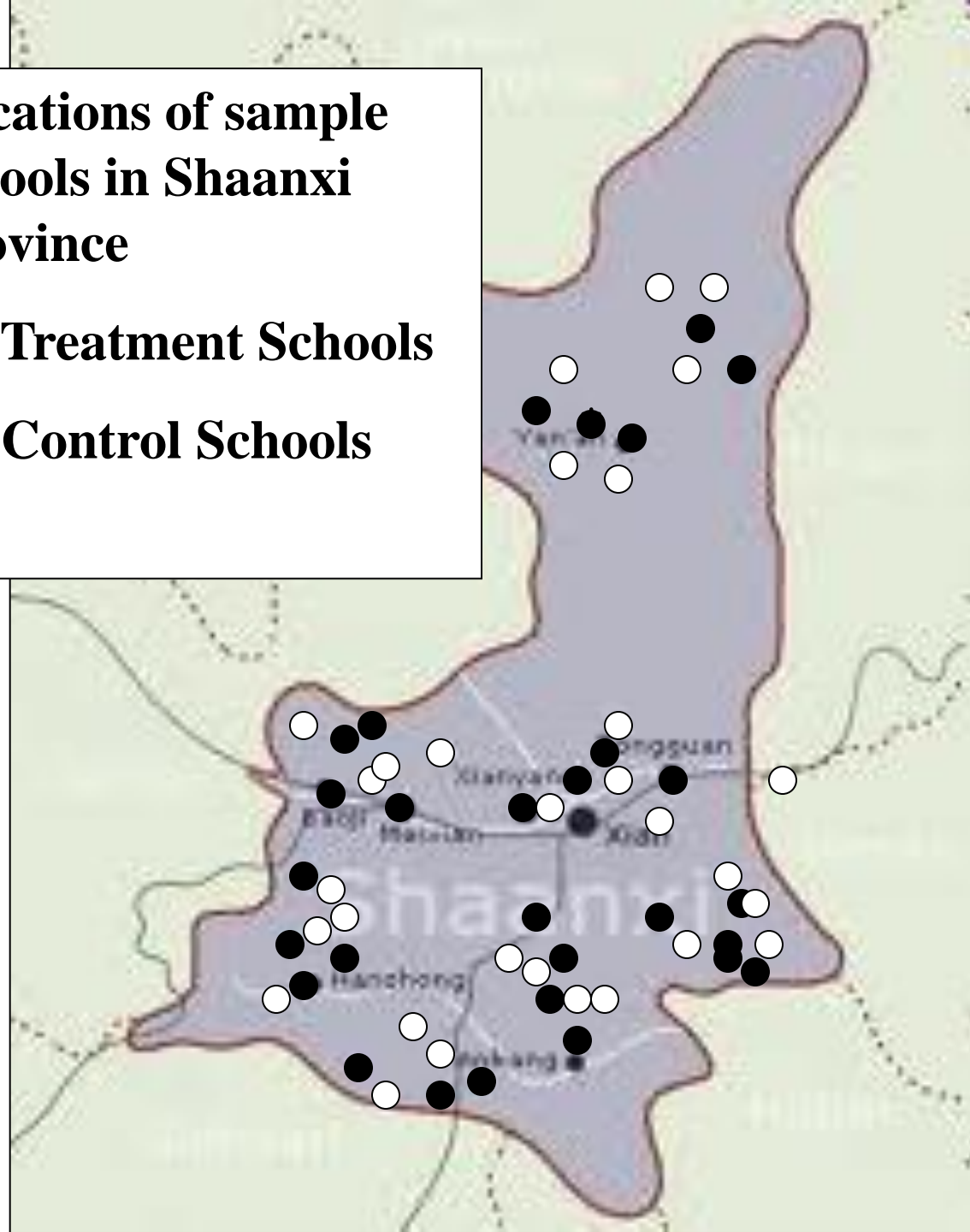
All fourth grade
students



Locations of sample schools in Shaanxi Province

(●) Treatment Schools

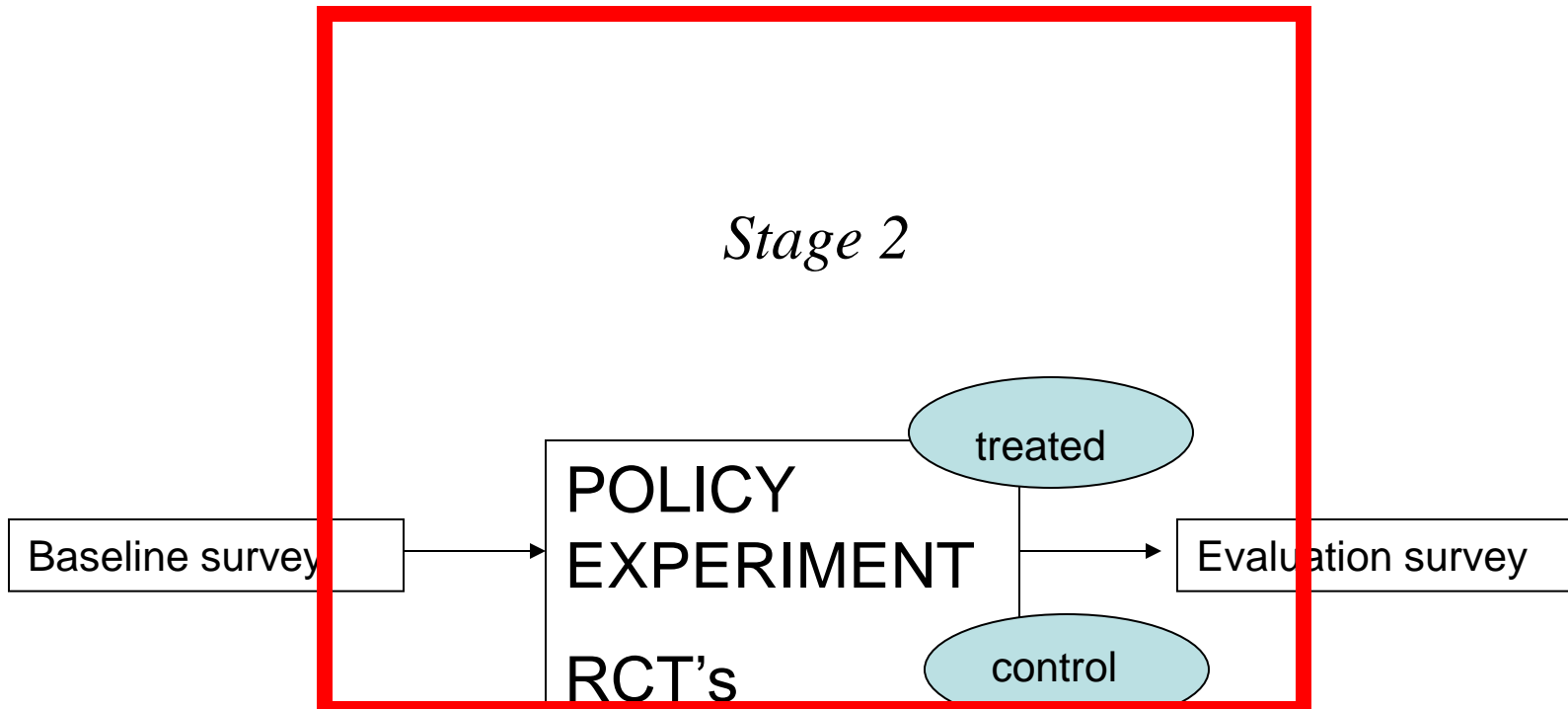
(○) Control Schools



Stage 2 → The Intervention

Will iron supplements → less anemia?

Lower anemia → Better school performance?



The Intervention

School Type A
(30 schools)

“Centrum / Day”

Give students one
multi-vitamin with iron
per day (5 mg of iron)

... from November
2008 to May 2009

(\approx 4 US cents/day)







30 control schools

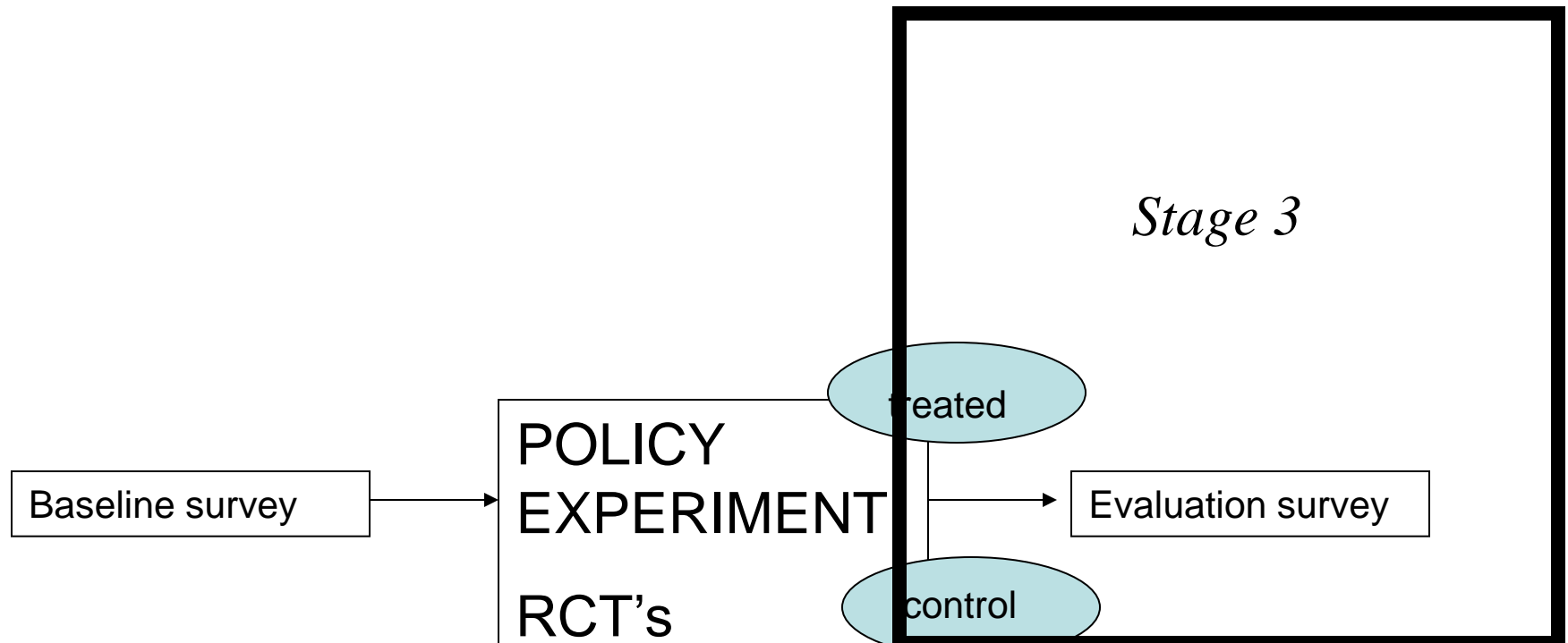


Zero: no vitamins

Evaluation Survey (stage 3)

Will iron supplements → less anemia?

Lower anemia → Better school performance?



Evaluation survey
(June 2009)

Re-taking the
standardized
academic tests ...

... after 5 months of
vitamins + letter to
parent.



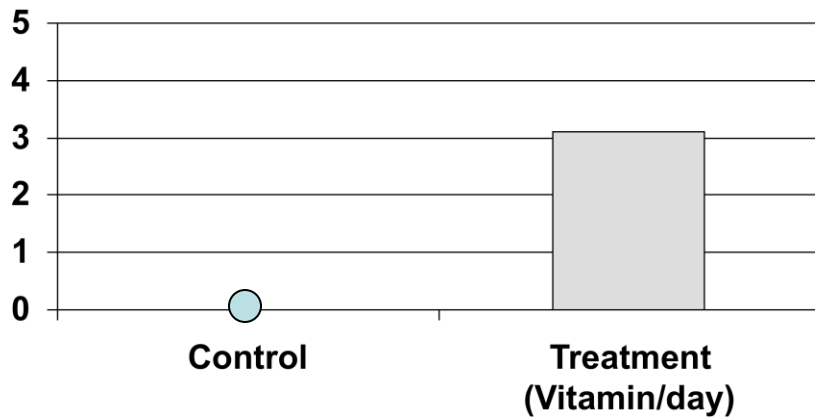
Re-taking the Hb Test (June 2009) Still anemic or not?



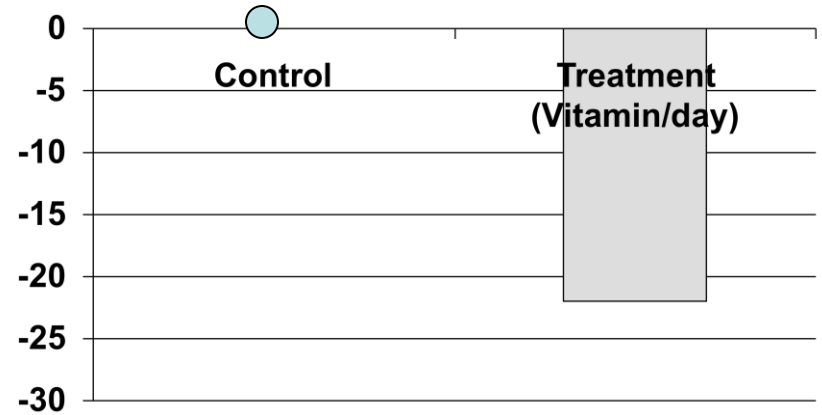
Results

Impact of vitamin on students:

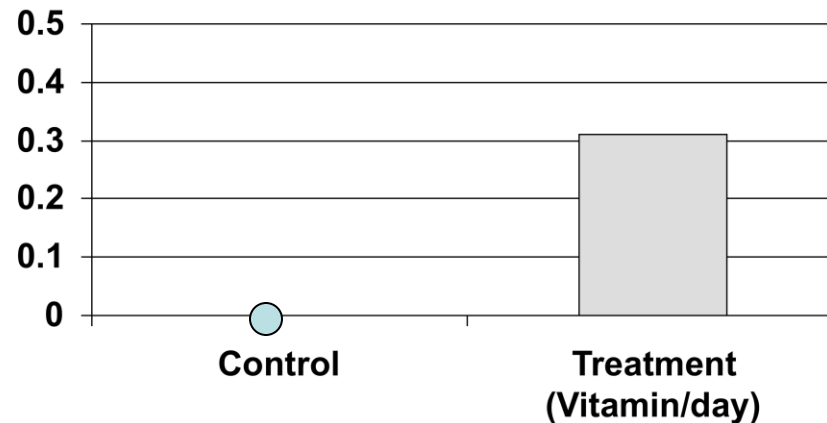
Hemoglobin Points



Anemia Rates (%)



Math Test Scores (std. dev.)



Great results ...

Publishable (of course: we got **statistically significant** results)

Policy impact (??)

- who did it effect?
- compliance?
- external validity?
- cost effectiveness?

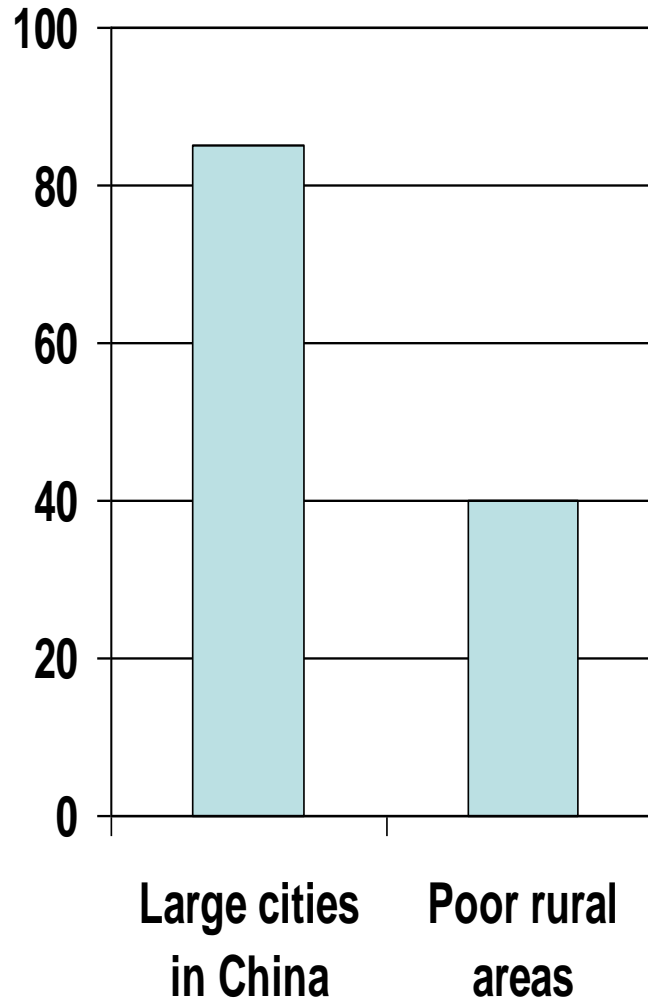
But, even “worse”

What happens if something like this happens?

The PROBLEM: *High School Gap in China today*

China in the 2010

Percent of students that go to **High School**



Reasons

- \$\$\$\$????

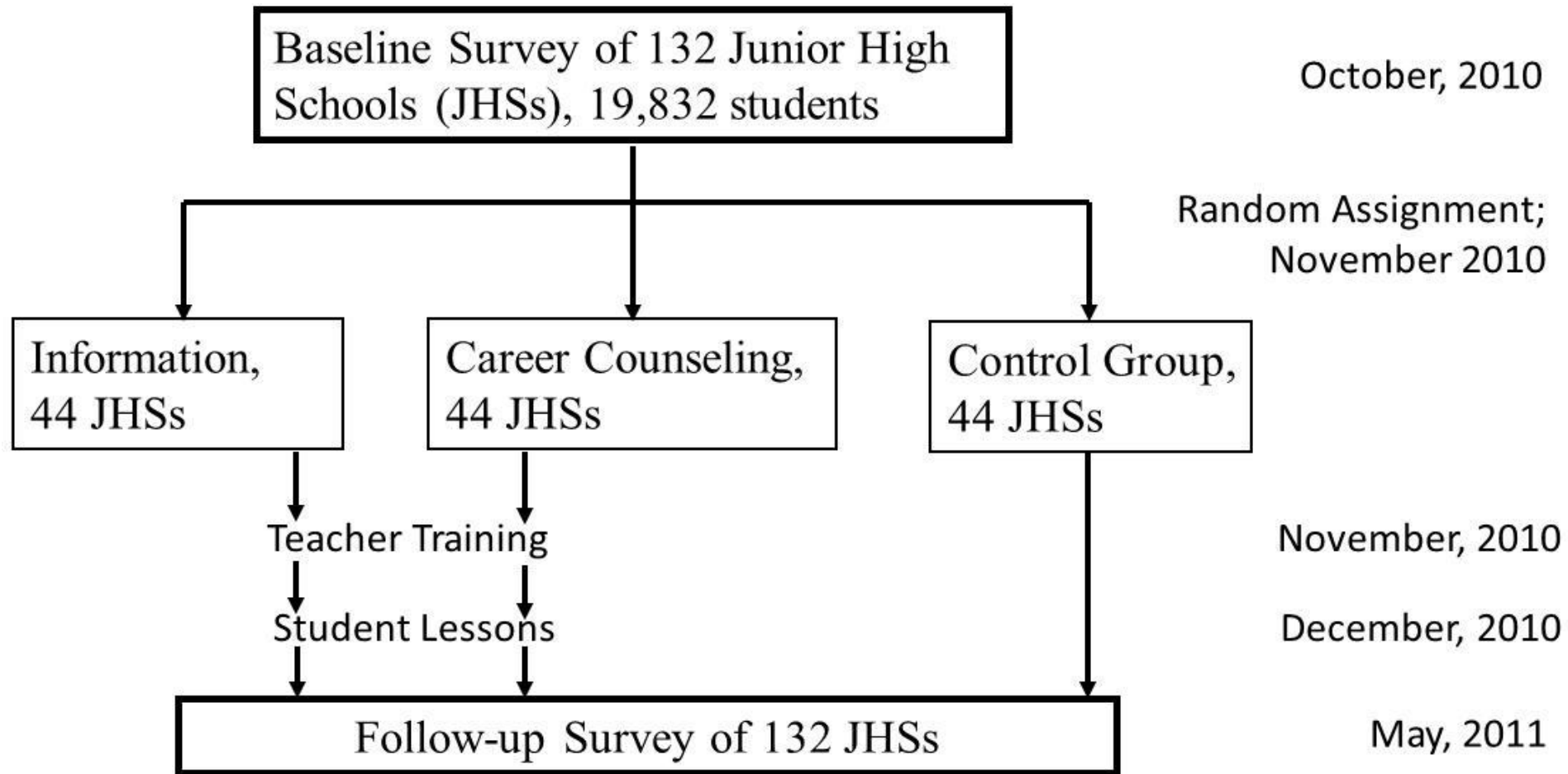
- Yes → but, decentralized fiscal system → local government will not spend \$\$\$\$ on making high school free → more educated people are, faster they leave the county!!

... or ...

- Information ????

- High school conveys high benefits on families ... and will likely be even higher in the future
- And, it is “inexpensive” → “Let’s try this!!”

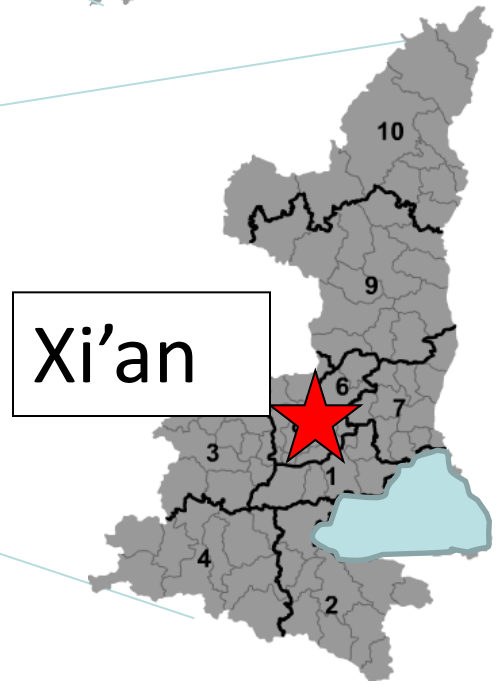
Step 1: Design



HEBEI



SHAANXI



Step 2: Baseline Survey

(2010.10)

- Student survey:
 - standardized math test;
 - household assets;
 - family characteristics;
 - schooling characteristics.
- Teacher and school survey



Students filling in student forms. [Right above]

Teachers filling in teacher forms. [Left below]

Step 3: Interventions (2010.12)

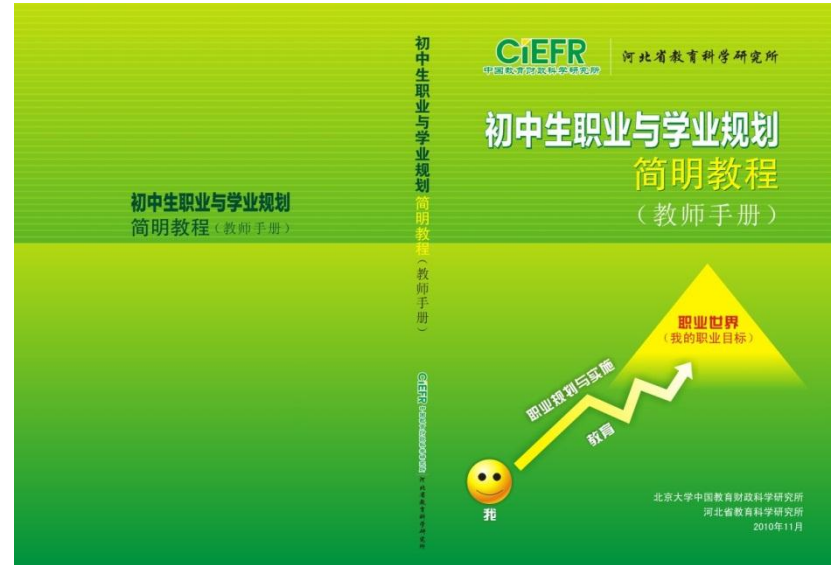
Information Intervention:

Professional counselor trained teachers to give a scripted 45 minute lesson on the wages and costs associated with different levels of schooling

Career Counseling Intervention

Professional counselor trained teachers to give 4 scripted lessons (45 minutes each) on:

- The world of work & your place in it
- Careers overview & career planning
- The information intervention



Step 4: Evaluation Survey (2011.05)

- Near identical survey forms as the baseline:
 - Standardized math test
 - Student forms
 - Teacher forms



Special attention given to identifying the dropped out students (distinguishing them from those who transferred out, repeated a grade or were temporarily absent).

Results

Results: Information and Counseling

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	dropout	math 2011	any HS	acad. HS	voc. HS
information	.01	-.01	-.01	-.03	-.01
	[.01]	[.04]	[.01]	[.02]	[.02]
counseling	.01**	-.07	.00	.02	.02
	[.01]	[.04]	[.01]	[.02]	[.02]
N	12,082	10,848	10,837	10,837	10,837
R ²	.08	.36	.14	.17	.29

Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1

Covariate-adjusted analyses

Impacts of:

- Information:
 - On drop out → none
 - On plans for high school → none
 - One learning → none
- Counseling:
 - On drop out → more drop out!!
 - On plans for high school → none
 - One learning → none

Which journal?

JNR

[journal of non-results]

Which policy maker?

[who wants to push something that failed?]

But, that was before ...

- In response to critique of Impact Evaluation's focus on: "impact/no impact" only ...
- ➔ Theory of Causal Chain Analysis

CCA helps address one a major criticism of the current wave of IE studies ... They only tell us: what works ... and not much else!

- If research teams can address this criticism, help answer a number of challenges:
 - Why would anyone want to be told that their project does not work
 - World Bank employee?
 - Government official?
 - NGO? Teach for China
 - If you only know it does not work, what is the implication? Eliminate the program ... or fix it? But, how? How to make it work better?

International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) is an international organization trying to put the “how” in rigorous IE with **“theory-based evaluation”** or **“causal chain analysis”**

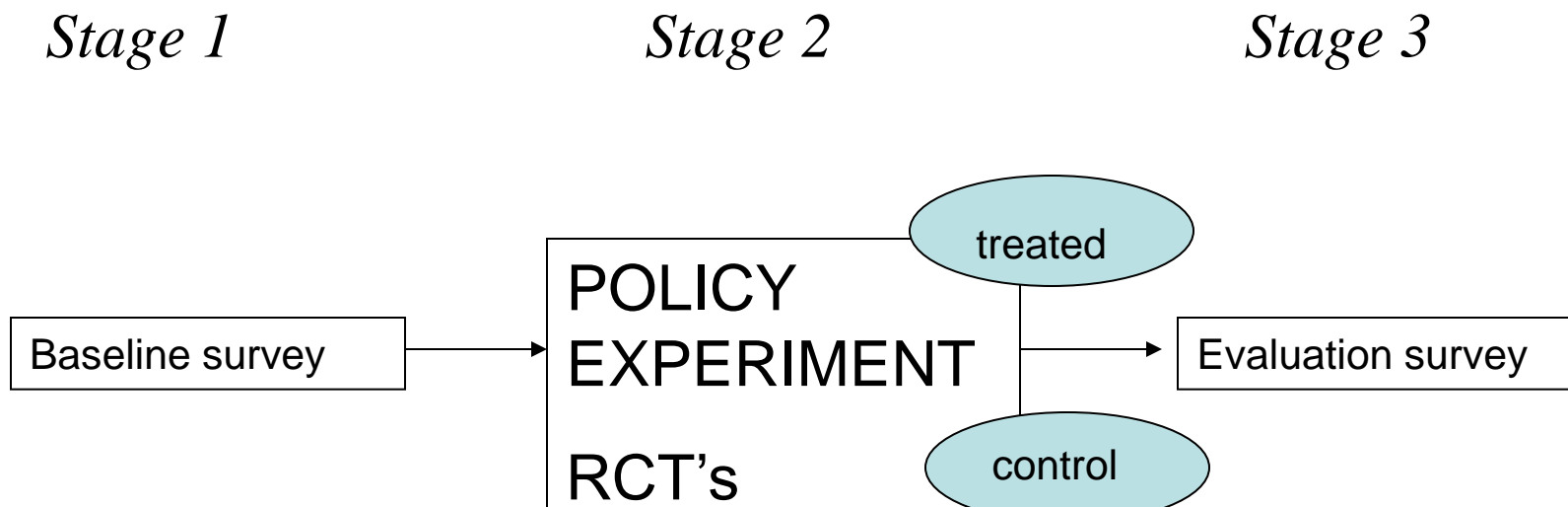
Example: a nutrition project in Bangladesh

- Source: Howard White and Edoardo Masset (2007) ‘The Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Program: findings from an impact evaluation’ *Journal of International Development* 19: 627-652

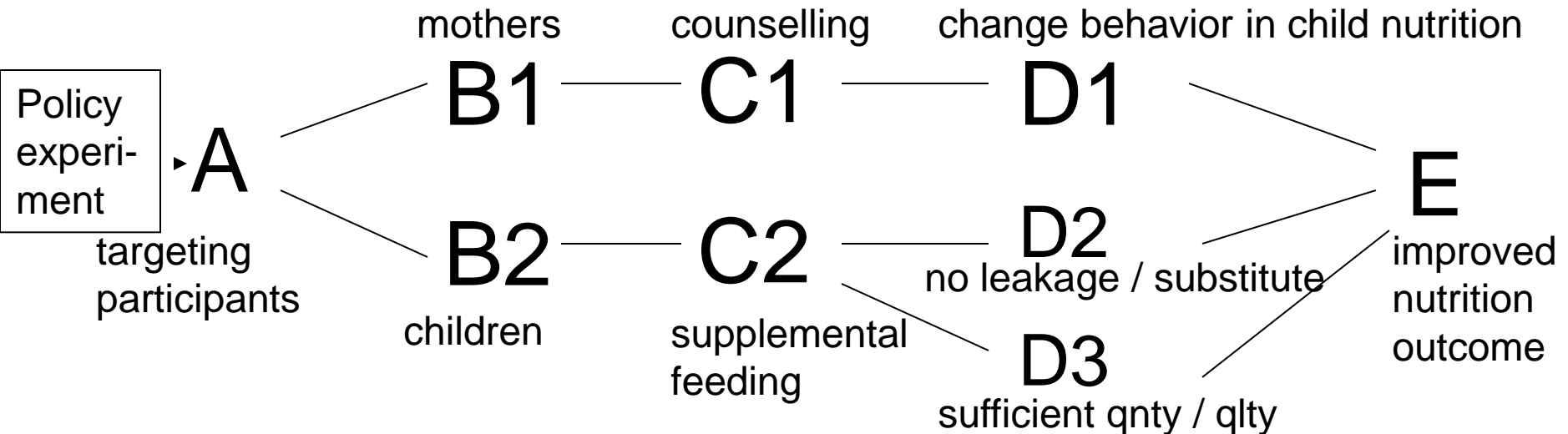
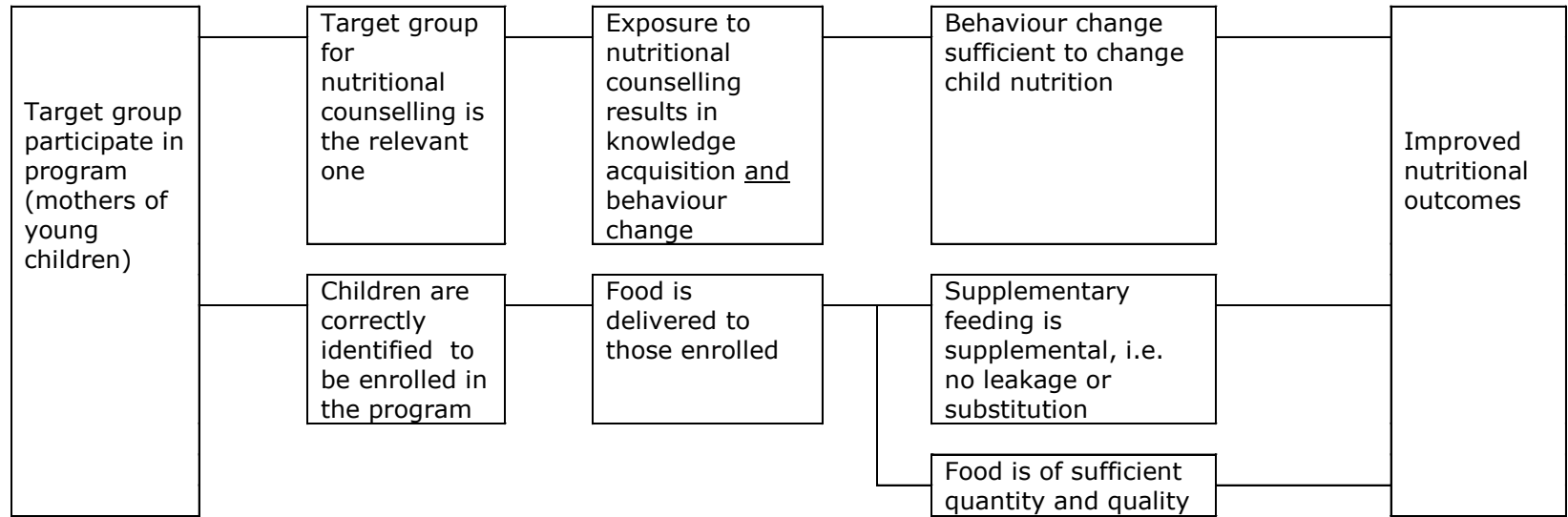
- Bangladesh Integrated Nutrition Project (BINP) ... a World Bank Project
- Problem: lots of malnutrition ... difficult to solve in traditional institutional structures
→
- Growth monitoring, nutritional counselling and supplementary feeding (based on a program in Tamil Nadu, which was successful)
- According to the design of the project, implemented by NGOs at field level, used Community Nutrition Practitioners (CNP)

Instead of: Simple Search for Impact

Will MCH program →
improve nutrition?



Program design (theory of change)

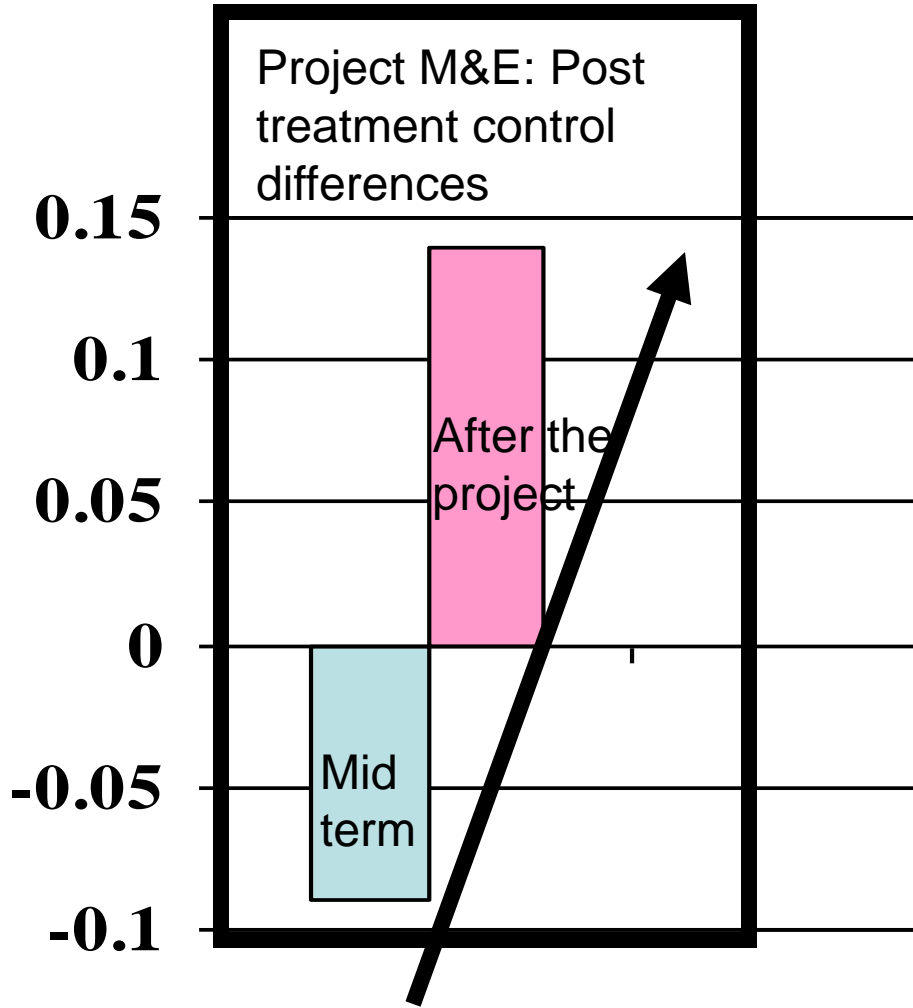


The evaluation story

- Looked like it was working – all bits in place and **outcome monitoring** data showed fall in severe malnutrition
- Bank agreed to scale up (this is an expensive program ... funded at expense of other projects)
- But Save the Children UK critical, though Bank's M&E team was positive
- Bank's evaluation department (IEG) did a more rigorous evaluation – found little or no impact
- Theory-based approach explains why

Measuring outcomes and impacts (M&E)

Height for Age Scores single differences
(between treatment and controls)

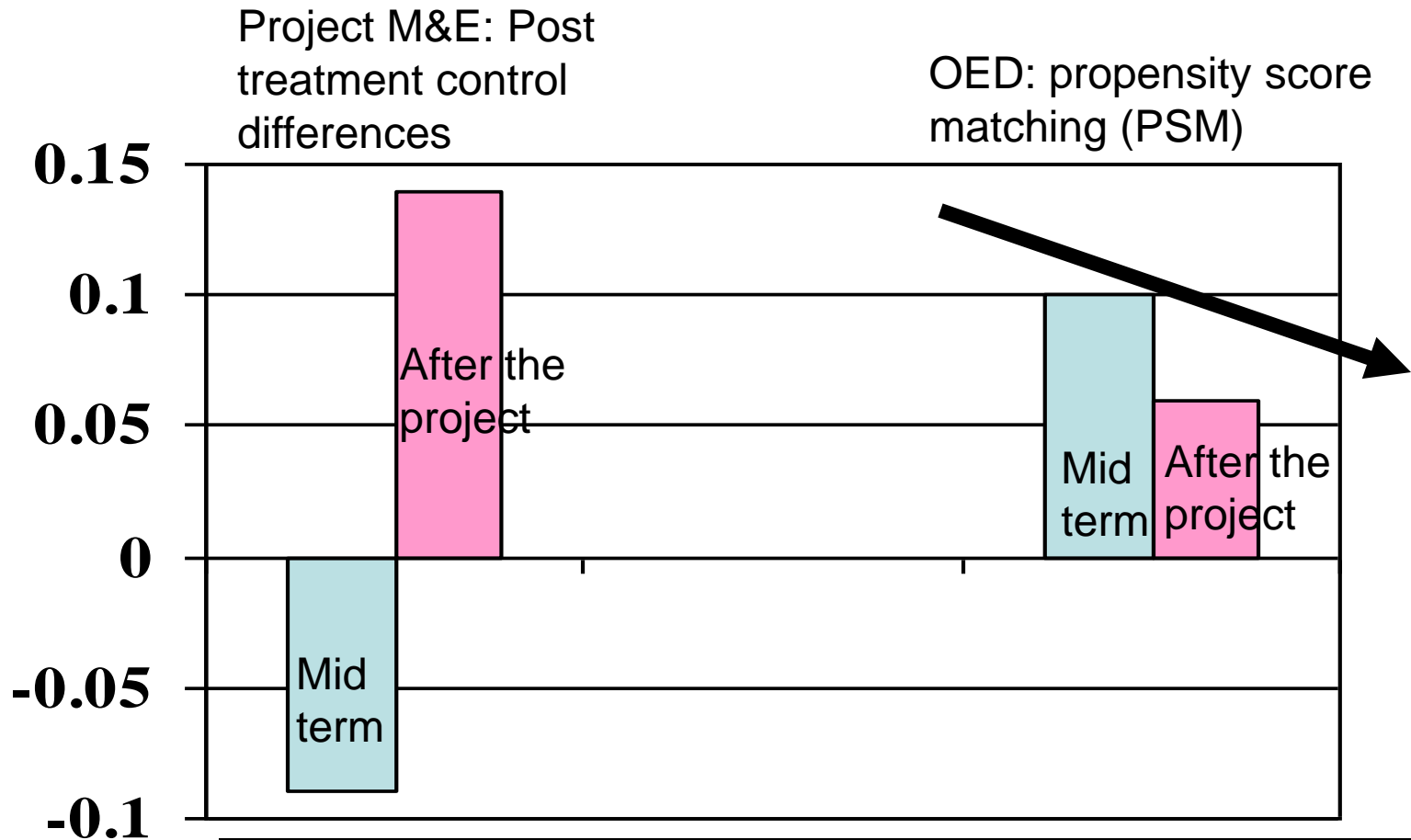


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Measuring outcomes and impacts

Height for Age Scores single differences
(between treatment and controls)



Two points:

- 1.) need for control group that is similar to treatment group (this is what PSM does)
- 2.) demands an explanation of the problems with the program

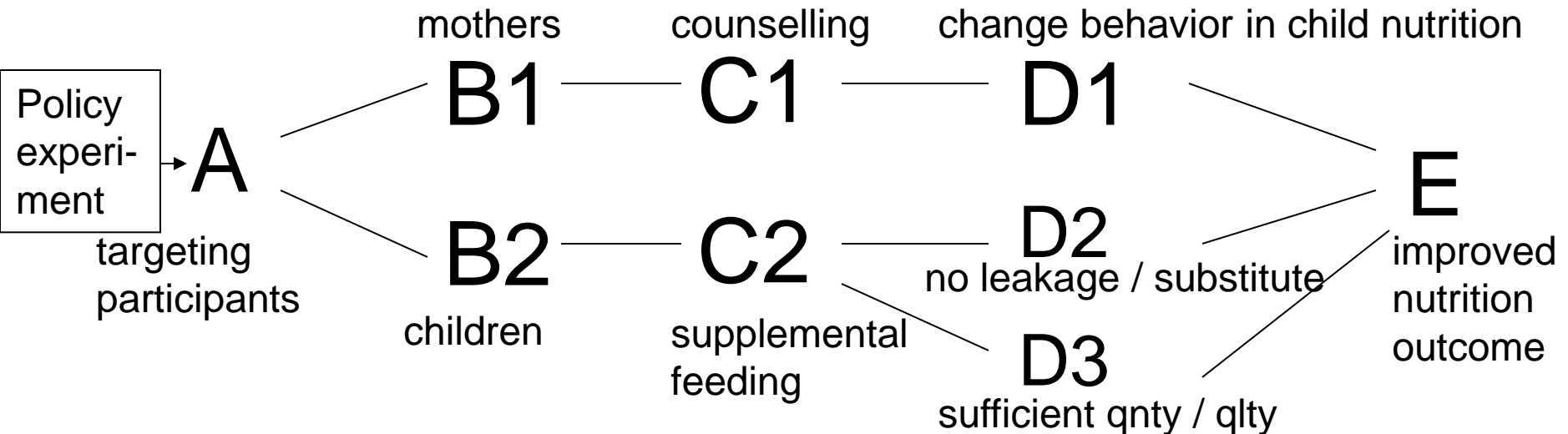
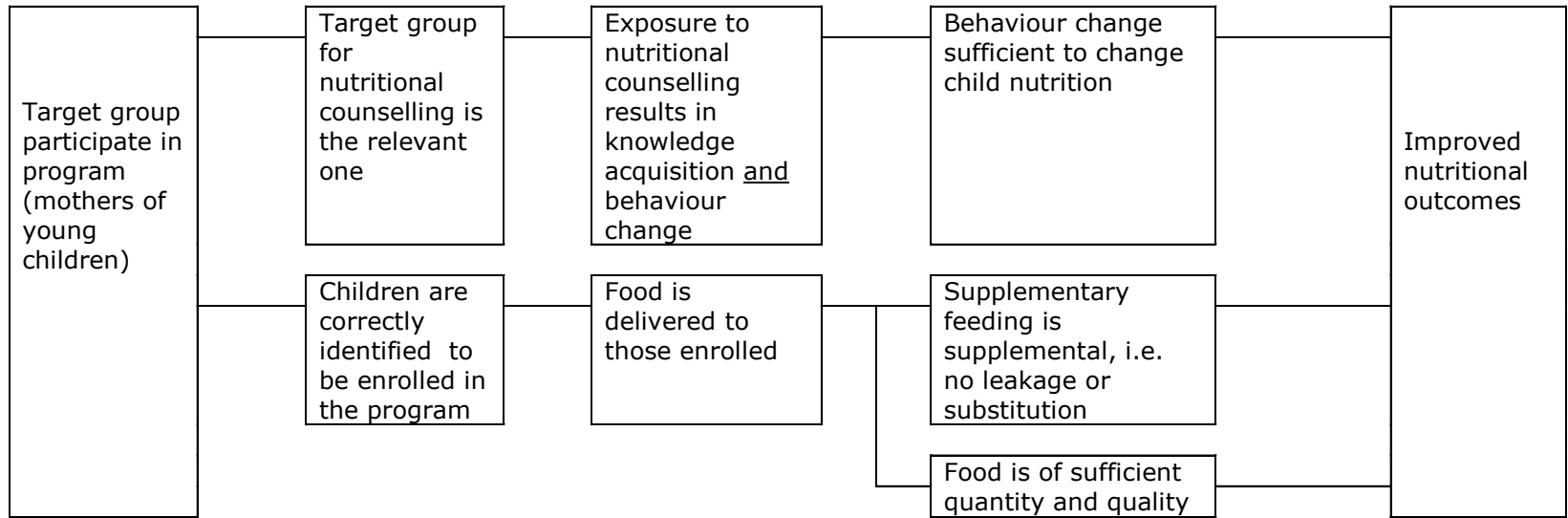
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- **Theory-based approach explains why**

Implementing theory-based analysis

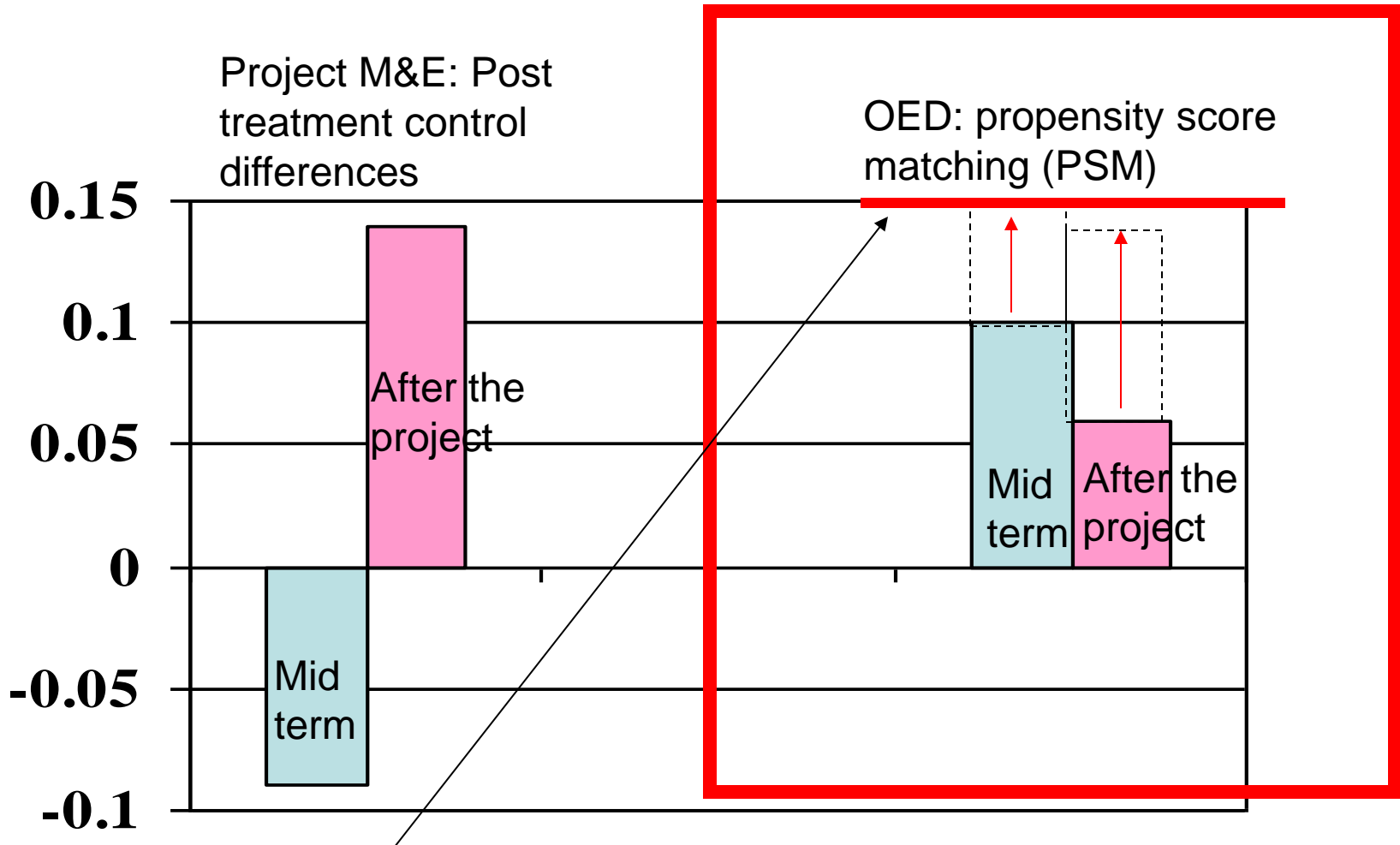
Assumption	Findings
3. Provide nutritional counseling to care givers	Mothers are <u>not</u> decision makers, especially if they live with their mother-in-law
2. Women know about sessions and attend	90% participation, lower in more conservative areas
1. Malnourished and growth faltering children correctly identified	No – community nutrition practitioners (CNPs) cannot interpret growth charts
4. Women acquire knowledge	Those attending training do so
5. And knowledge is turned into practice	No there is a substantial knowledge-practice gap
6. Supplementary feeding is additional food for intended beneficiary	No, considerable evidence of substitution and leakage
Adopted changes are sufficient to improve intended outcomes	Only sometimes → for mother/caregivers

Program design (theory of change)



Impacts when mother participated

Height for Age Scores single differences
(between treatment and controls)

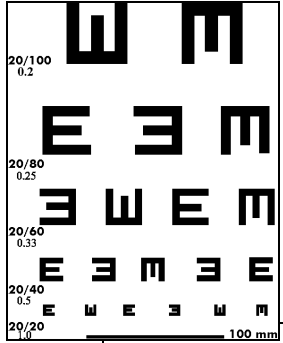


When examining just mothers that did not live with their mother in laws ... and babies were supposed to be in the project ...

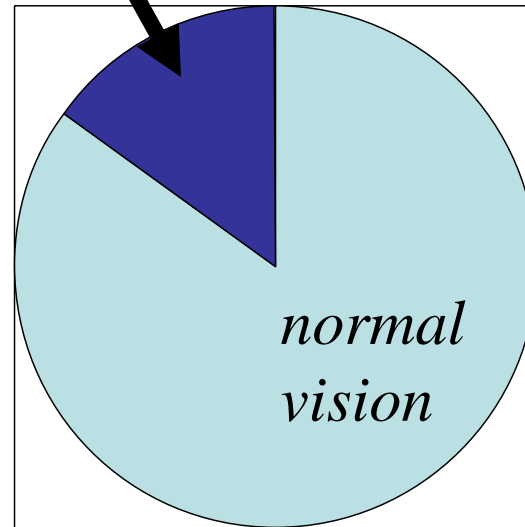
How to implement “Theory of Causal Chain”?

- It needs to be developed BEFORE / AS PART OF → the Project Design ...
- It is the plan around which all activities are based:
 - [Preanalysis Plans]
 - Sampling / Identification of Outcome
 - Baseline Survey
 - Design of the Intervention
 - Endline Survey
 - Analysis

Testing 19,500 children in Gansu and Shaanxi Provinces

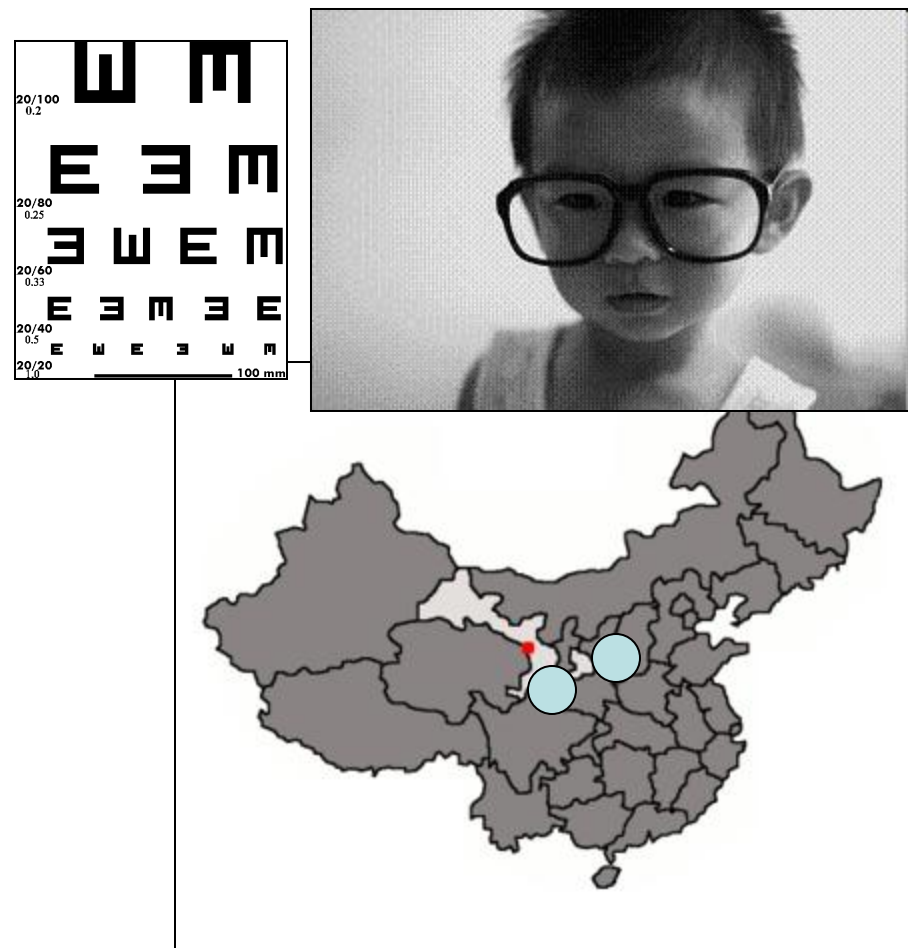


myopic

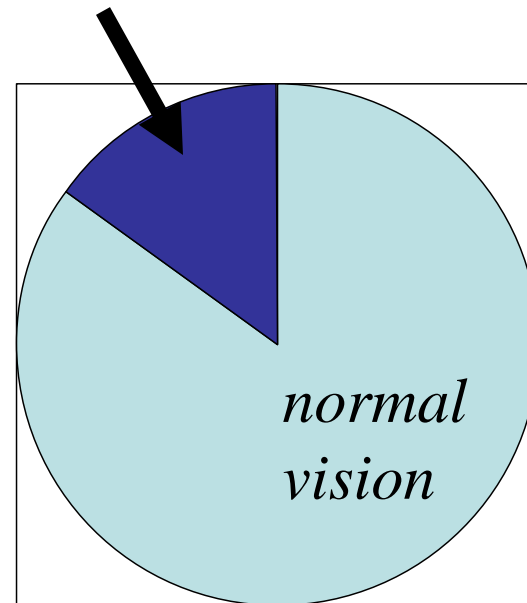


→ 5000 ($\approx 25\%$) were myopic (or nearsighted).

Testing 19,500 children in Gansu and Shaanxi Provinces



myopic



→ 5000 ($\approx 25\%$) were myopic (or nearsighted).

Only 650 had eyeglasses ($\approx 3\%$)

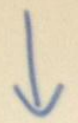
Main Question of Project

- Can we improve educational performance by providing eyeglasses to students?

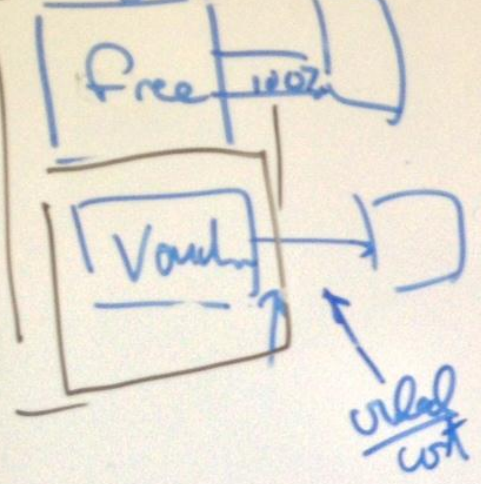
Two approaches

- Free glasses / exam in schools / dispense in school
- Vouchers / exam in schools / make family + student undertake an ordeal (up to 4 hour bus ride) to pick up glasses

Intervenor



provide glasses uptake



take glasses to school

- sunk cost



- sunk cost

- seeing glass



- kids own tie/uf

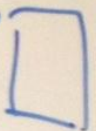
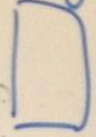
mediating effort

- teacher in-class activity

- parents in-house rules

- treated.

wear glasses



teasing or support/ret

actual cost

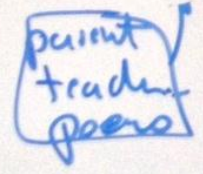
- distance time

Kids

Parent

teacher

Peer



knowledge

- vision problems no; mild; med; severe

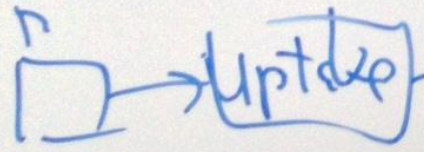
- experience w/ glasses

- feel unconfid

- headache

- own # of kids w/ glasses

test score



- miff

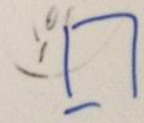
- social club

- study hub

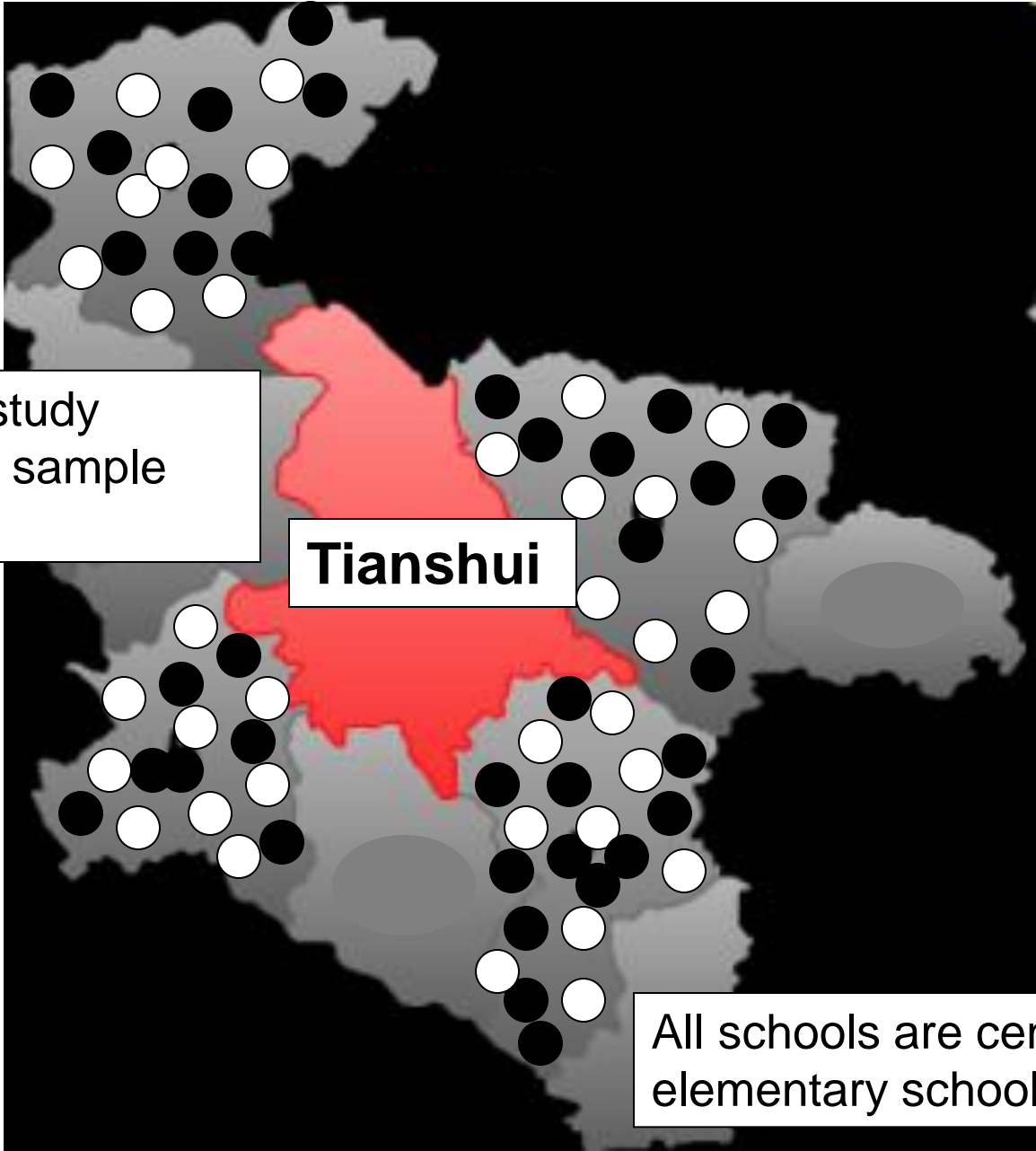
- home school/d

- teacher attention

- self esteem



Affects sampling ...



Sites of 50 study schools in 4 sample counties ...

Tianshui

All schools are centralized, K-6 elementary schools



1. Do you currently have:
 Yes: _____ No: _____

2. What means a most of your land is used?

3. Before this survey, have you heard of growing vegetables on your farmland previously?
 Yes: _____ No: _____

4. If possible, would you be interested in growing vegetables?
 Yes: No: Don't Know:

5. What is the maximum \$/10000 you would be willing to invest in growing vegetables?

6. If you could get the whole you want in question 4, how many acres of vegetables would you consider planting? _____

7. Please list which is preferred on the total row under growing vegetables and the crop:

	Crop (Type of Veg, Fruit, Yell, etc.)	Area
Enough	None	21
4		
8		
1		
8		

8. Please circle your response to each statement below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Currently, I do NOT have enough about the production of vegetables to consider it as a future option on my land	1	2	3	4	5
The planting period for vegetables will conflict with the planting period for our other crops	1	2	3	4	5
The harvesting period for vegetables will conflict with the harvesting period for our other crops	1	2	3	4	5
Markets for vegetables are NOT developed enough to allow an investor	1	2	3	4	5
Producers who do vegetables in Iowa (and the other crops I produce)	1	2	3	4	5
I would consider growing a long-term contract (around 10 years) with a company to grow vegetables for energy	1	2	3	4	5
I would need technical assistance to learn how to grow and harvest vegetables	1	2	3	4	5
The market would be profitable once energy costs become fully independent	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to provide more habitat for wildlife on my land	1	2	3	4	5
I would need government payments to produce vegetables	1	2	3	4	5

9. How many acres did you have in 2000?
 _____ Acres Owned
 _____ Acres Rented
 _____ Acres FRAP (Total Acres)



Affects survey design ...

... and analysis ...

... with solid Causal Chain Analysis, can do the following:

- Does project work or not?
- Who does it work for?
- If it does not work, why does it not work?
- If it does work, what could make it work better?
- Answer a lot more questions that policy makers are interested in ...

Q3: Are study findings making their way into policy decisions in developing countries and at organizations like the multilateral development banks?

In part in response to the availability of evidence-based research, China has created a system for connecting research (evaluators) with the top leadership

...

政策研究简报

2009 第 14 期 (总第 84 期)

中国科学院农业政策研究中心

2009 年 12 月 1 日

减少贫困地区儿童贫血现象，促进儿童全面发展

儿童营养与健康是关系到国家未来发展的重要因素之一。联合国儿童基金会的研究表明，发展中国家有一半左右的儿童患有贫血，其中铁元素摄入不足和吸收不充分是最主要原因。儿童贫血不仅影响身体健康，而且会导致注意力集中时间短，学习能力差，长期来看会影响德智体的全面发展。为了了解我国贫困地区儿童贫血情况，中科院农业政策研究中心农村教育行动计划课题组于 2008 年 11 月在陕西省 8 个贫困县 66 个小学，对 4000 多名农村学龄儿童（四年级学生）的贫血和学业表现状况进行基线调查，并对他们进行了为期半年的营养补充和家长营养知识宣传试点干预；在此基础上，从 2009 年 6 月开始对试点干预结果做了评估和分析，期望通过上述干预研究探索出解决贫困农村儿童贫血的可能办法。以下是我们调研的主要结果。

一、贫困农村儿童贫血状况不容忽视

1. 贫困地区儿童贫血比例超过 1/3。按照我国同年龄段贫血诊断的标准（血红蛋白水平低于 120 克/升），基线调查的检测结果表明陕西贫困地区四年级的学生有 38% 存在贫血。虽然这一结果比其它发展中国家的平均数要好，但据此结果估算，全国贫困地区还有上千万的儿童存在不同程度的贫血。

2. 寄宿学生贫血情况更为严重。基线调查结果表明，从贫血比例来看，寄宿生（41%）显著高于非寄宿生（36%）；中午在学校吃饭的学生（41%）

Official policy brief (think of President Obama's desk and the desks of his cabinet members)

中国科学院

中国科学院政务信息采用通知

中科院农业政策研究中心：

你单位 张林秀、黄季焜、刘承芳、罗仁福 等同志于 2009 年 12 月 5 日 向办公厅信息宣传处报送的信息 中科院专家关于减少贫困地区儿童贫血现象促进儿童全面发展的建议，被院办公厅刊物 《中国科学院专报信息》2009 年第 217 期 采用，并上报 中办和国办，已被 中办 刊物 《专报》 采用，国办 刊物 《参阅》 采用，并得到 温家宝总理、李克强副总理、刘延东国务委员 批示。

感谢贵单位对我们工作的大力支持，希望继续关注和支持我院的政务信息工作，及时将本单位的科研成果、发展动态以及针对我院和国家的重要建议等重要信息报送办公厅，为国家发展和我院的知识创新工作做出更大贡献。

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Formal notification that there has been a “policy directive” directing MoEdu and MoHealth to move our information into the policy discussion

政策研究简报

2009 第 14 期 (总第 84 期)

中国科学院农业政策研究中心

2009 年 12 月 1 日

减少贫困地区儿童贫血现象，促进儿童全面发展

儿童营养与健康是关系到国家未来发展的重要因素之一。联合国儿童基金会的研究表明，发展中国家有一半左右的儿童患有贫血，其中铁元素摄入不足和吸收不充分是最主要原因。儿童贫血不仅影响身体健康，而且会导致注意力集中时间短，学习能力差，长期来看会影响德智体的全面发展。为了了解我国贫困地区儿童贫血情况，中科院农业政策研究中心农村教育行动计划课题组于 2008 年 11 月在陕西省 8 个贫困县 66 个小学，对 4000 多名农村学龄儿童（四年级学生）的贫血和学业表现状况进行基线调查，并对他们进行了为期半年的营养补充和家长营养知识宣传试点干预；在此基础上，从 2009 年 6 月开始对试点干预结果做了评估和分析，期望通过上述干预研究探索出解决贫困农村儿童贫血的可能办法。以下是我们调研的主要结果。

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你单位 张林秀、黄季煜、刘承芳、罗仁福 等同志于 2009 年 12 月 5 日 向办公厅信息宣传处报送的信息 中科院专家关于减少贫困地区儿童贫血现象的建议

《中国科学院专报信息》2009 年第 217 期 采用，并上报 中办 和 国办，已被 中办 刊物 《专报》 采用，国办 刊物 《参阅》 采用，并得到 温家宝总理、李克强副总理、刘延东国务委员 批示。

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Wen Jiabao Li Keqiang ... Liu Yandong

E-mail : shishuo@cashq.ac.cn



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REAP has submitted 17 policy briefs to State Council

政策研究简报

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政策研究简报

2010第6期(总第91期)

中国科学院农业政策研究中心 2010年12月

关于贫困地区儿童肠道寄生虫感染情况的调查和政策建议

肠道寄生虫病是影响大众身体健康的重要公共卫生问题之一。发病多见于儿童，常引起营养不良、贫血、生长迟缓、智力受损，极易诱发其它儿童疾病。建国后到上世纪90年代初的几十年间，我国政府一直致力于通过广泛宣传寄生虫病防治知识和采用规范药物驱虫等防治手段，使得儿童肠道寄生虫感染率大幅度降低。90年代初后，由于肠道寄生虫病逐渐消失，以及不再被列为国家流行病防治工作的重点。

然而，我们最近在贫困地区调查时发现，肠道寄生虫在一些贫困地区依然相当普遍。该调查由中国科学院农业政策研究中心和国家疾病预防控制中心土源性寄生虫病研究所合作，于2010年4月和6月在四川和贵州随机抽取6个国家级贫困县，对儿童肠道寄生虫感染情况进行检测。调查涉及95个行政村的817名3-5岁的学龄前儿童和这些村在46所小学就读的890名8-10岁在校学龄儿童。通过粪点检测，对所有儿童的蛔虫、钩虫和鞭虫感染情况做了检查。同时，在样本儿童中还随机抽取了其中的三分之一进行蛲虫检测。调查内容包括儿童体检(身高和体重)、儿童卫生和饮食习惯、父母教育程度、儿童的生活环境等。

一、贫困地区儿童肠道寄生虫感染及防治现状堪忧

1. 贫困地区儿童肠道寄生虫感染率高，并存在显著的区域差异。在三种肠道寄生虫(蛔虫、钩虫和鞭虫)中，发现有任何一种寄生虫的儿童比例(或感染率)达到22%(学龄前儿童为21%，在校学生为23%)。同时区域间差异很大，所调查的贵州省3个县(简称贵州，下同)，在村

2009第9期(总第79期)

中国科学院农业政策研究中心 2009年9月11日

改善流动儿童教育状况，让祖国的花朵在关爱的阳光下共同成长

随着进城务工农民人数的增多，跟随父母进城居住和就学的子女(又称为“流动儿童”)大量涌现。为保障流动儿童接受义务教育的机会，国家在1998年发布了《流动儿童少年就学暂行办法》，2001年又发布了《国务院关于基础教育改革与发展的决定》，该《决定》明确指出，解决流动儿童接受义务教育“以流入地区政府管理为主，以全日制公办学校为主”的原则。此后，许多城市开始逐步将流动儿童纳入当地的公办学校就读。但是，最近我们的调查表明，即使在执行政策较好的北京市，流动儿童(特别是在打工子弟学校就读的流动儿童)的教育也还存在一系列值得关注的问题，而全国的情况更可想而知。

一、当前打工子弟学校的办学现状

目前，我国现有的统计数据和资料缺乏城市打工子弟学校和学生的相关信息。在这种情况下，为了深入了解流动儿童的教育现状，中国科学院农业政策研究中心在2008年下半年经过三个多月的多方查找，终于在2008年底整理出一份北京市打工子弟学校的名单。在此基础上，调研组于2009年上半年在北京随机抽取并调查了7个区的23所打工子弟学校。为了便于比较，调研组同时还随机抽取并调查了打工子弟学校附近的4所接受流动儿童的公办学校，以及西北地区5个国家级贫困县(以下简称“西部国家级贫困县”)的10所农村小学。调查和分析结果发现，目前流动儿童已经形成一个庞大的群体，在打工子弟学校就读的流动儿童

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等方面开展进

如下两
改革30
儿园。

初发展到顶峰
早建立了农村
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Policy Action

These policy directives directly respond to our brief and are signed by:



Li Keqiang:
Premier



Liu Yandong: Vice Premier



Li Bin: Minister of
Health

But, it does not happen without a concerted effort (pre-thought out plan) and a lot of effort

- We start with P.A.C.'s [not political action committees, like here in DC]: Policy Action Committees
 - 2 to 5 local officials that will be our “advisors”:
 - Get input during experimentation design ...
 - More get to understand the project
 - E.g., in the case of RCT's ... truly randomly assigned
 - If successful, PAC-members are given “ownership” and have an incentive to try to upscale ...
 - They help us push policy ... and often sign Policy Briefs ...
 - Policy Briefs can “give political cover.”

Policy suggestions (with the support of a lot of other/complimentary work—of course) → associated with:

- 20 billion dollar “nutritious lunch” program
 - 26 million children x 200 lunches per year x 3.5 yuan per lunch x 10 years
- New financial aid fund for poor kids at high school level
- Deworming campaign in 62 poor counties

Ironic thing: can't run a DiD regression and show causal impact of our impact evaluation ... but, the correlations are strong ...

Thank You!



<http://reap.stanford.edu>