

# The Case For Remote Data Collection

We are often asked the differences between remote versus in-person data collection. The data speaks for itself – remote surveying provides a cost-effective, high speed alternative to in-person data collection without sacrificing the quality and rigor of the research.

You can learn more about the validity of remote data collection from the literature shared here or the 60 Decibels case study on the next slide.

Here are a few myths and truths about the ability to gather representative, quality insights by speaking directly to end-customers on the phone.

**Myth #1:** Data tends to be less accurate when gathered remotely

False. A study conducted in 2016 published by the World Bank found in-person and phone responses were aligned and accurate. The respondents, owners of microenterprises did not change their behavior based on the medium. Read more [here](#).

**Myth #2:** Remote survey methods are just as costly as in-person

Definitely not. The same study cited above, [Call Me Maybe](#), demonstrates the significant cost savings when opting for remote data collection methods.

**Myth #3:** Research using remote data collection can't be published as academic, peer-reviewed studies

Think again! Check out [this recent study](#) published by Science Advances in February 2021 - *Falling Living Standards during the COVID-19 Crisis: Quantitative evidence from nine developing countries*

# Case Study

Comparing the effectiveness and rigor of phone vs. in-person survey methods

“ Since connecting to the grid, I have noticed that my children's grades at school have improved because I'm able to help them with their homework in the evening now that we have dependable lighting. This has made me very proud as a father.”

- Phone survey respondent: Male, 42

## Overview

In April 2021, 60 Decibels conducted an independent verification of the Beyond the Grid Fund, Zambia (BGFZ) for NEFCO with four participating Energy Service Providers in Zambia.

60 Decibels research focused on verification of customer Energy Service Subscriptions under the fund and customer insights including profile, feedback, impact, satisfaction, and experience



## Methodology

- Data was collected in-person and by phone.
- 60 Decibels randomly selected customers to interview from the full dataset provided by participating Energy Service Providers.
- The sample was representative of the overall customer database by available information (product type and region).
- The sample was randomly assigned to a phone-based or in-person survey group.
- Phone interviews were conducted by the 60 Decibels team. In-person interviews were conducted by IPSOS, sub-contracted by 60 Decibels.
- The same standardised survey, designed by 60 Decibels, was used for both methods.
- In the final sample, 88% of interviews were by phone (554), 12% were in-person interviews (72).

## Results

We interrogated the data across both methods of collection and found no significant differences in the verification or insights by data collection method.

