

INNOVATIONS FOR POVERTY ACTION | COUNTRY PROGRAM BRIEF

Kenya



Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) discovers and promotes effective solutions to global poverty problems. We design, rigorously evaluate, and refine these solutions and their applications together with decisionmakers to ensure that the evidence created is used to improve opportunities for the world's poor. In the ten years since IPA was founded, we have worked with over 250 leading academics to manage over 400 evaluations in 51 countries. Future growth will be concentrated in focus countries, such as Kenya, where we have local and international staff, established relationships with government, NGOs, and the private sector, and deep knowledge of local issues.

More Evidence

In Kenya, we have continued our global tradition of rigorous, applicable research by building foundational research capacity and conducting evaluations in areas of pressing national concern. Examples of our research below offer promising insights into everyday issues that affect the lives of the Kenyan poor.

FINANCE

Simply giving cash to poor Kenyans leads to significant improvements in income, food security, and psychological well-being. A recent study found that the GiveDirectly model of unconditional cash transfers, giving money to the poor with no strings attached, was effective. Households who receive cash experience, on average, a 33 percent increase in income and a 53 percent increase in assets. While common perceptions might suggest

that the poor will spend cash on vices, in this Kenyan program, on average, the poor actually spent cash given to them exclusively on a broad variety of items, including food, shelter, and productive investments. The study has received extensive media coverage, influencing global debates on the value of giving cash to the poor.

AGRICULTURE

Loans for farmers to purchase rainwater harvesting tanks increase the probability that girls are enrolled in school. A study of a loan program which enabled dairy farmers to purchase rainwater harvesting tanks with four percent down shows that milk production improved, specifically for those with at previous access to piped water. The loan program also reduced the time girls spent fetching water by 35 percent, decreasing demands on

their time, and increasing the likelihood that they were in school, even in an area where girls' enrollment was already high. Asset collateralization also significantly increased loan use without decreasing the repayment rate, suggesting that improving access to credit gives farmers access to productive technologies otherwise out of their financial reach.

IPA KENYA

Office established in 2005 with the affiliated research presence for 10 years

FOCUS SECTORS

Agriculture
Education
Finance
Health
Water & Sanitation

RESEARCH PROJECTS

52 Completed, 28 in Progress

KEY PARTNERS

Angaza Design, GiveDirectly, Ministry of Education, Mwanuzi Super Company, Safaricom

KEY RESEARCHERS

Passare (Stanford), Paul Gertler (UC Berkeley), Johannes Haushofer (MIT), Michael Kremer (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Ted Miguel (UC Berkeley), Gert Nolte (University of Toronto)

* For more information on these studies and others, visit povertyaction.org/kenya

Kenya Country Brief

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