

IPA founder Dean Karlan awarded Guggenheim fellowship

IPA would like to congratulate our founder, Yale University economist Dean Karlan, on being selected for the prestigious Guggenheim fellowship. According to the foundation:

Guggenheim Fellowships are intended for men and women who have already demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts.

Dean is a Professor of Economics at Yale University. His research focuses on microeconomic issues of poverty, typically employing experimental methodologies to examine what works, what does not, and why in sustainable income generation for the ultra-poor, microfinance, health, and charitable giving. Much of his work uses behavioral economics insights to examine economic and policy issues relevant to developing countries, with particular attention to policies to increase income and financial wellbeing for those in extreme poverty. In global microfinance, he has studied credit impact, interest rate policy, savings impact and product design, social capital, credit scoring, entrepreneurship training, and contract structure. In the United States, he focuses on household finance and behavioral health.

During his fellowship year, Karlan will focus on research to understand the relationship between psychosocial interventions (cognitive behavioral therapy in Ghana; religious teachings through church in the Philippines) and economic interventions (grants, training, coaching and access to savings) to increase income sustainably for those in extreme poverty.



In 2002, he founded Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), a non-profit organization dedicated to discovering and promoting effective solutions to global poverty problems. Karlan is currently the President of IPA, which since 2002 has grown from a small research operation to an international organization with 20 global offices working together with more than 400 researchers to execute over 500 studies. This research has informed hundreds of successful programs that now impact millions of individuals worldwide.

In 2015, Karlan founded ImpactMatters, a nonprofit dedicated to producing impact audits, which assess whether an organization uses and produces appropriate evidence of impact. In 2007 he co-founded stickK.com, a website that uses lessons from behavioral economics to help people reach personal goals, such as weight loss and smoking cessation, through commitment contracts on corporate wellness platforms.

In 2011, Karlan co-authored More Than Good Intentions: How a New Economics is Helping to Solve Global Poverty. He has a forthcoming book with Princeton University Press, Failing in the Field: What We Can Learn When Field Research Goes Wrong. He is also finalizing another book for release, The Goldilocks Challenge, about how socially-minded organizations can manage pressure for more data from stakeholders, while still adhering to important principles of credibility, actionability, responsibility, and transportability.

In addition to leading the boards of IPA and ImpactMatters, Karlan is on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the M.I.T. Jameel Poverty Action Lab. He received a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers from the National Science

Foundation, was named an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Fellow, and received a Distinguished Alumni Award for Public Service from the University of Chicago Booth Graduate School of Business and Distinguished Alumni Award from the Duke University Talent Identification Program. Karlan received a Ph.D. in Economics from M.I.T., an M.B.A. and an M.P.P. from the University of Chicago, and a B.A. in International Affairs from the University of Virginia.

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