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Effective Giving Message Spreading Widely This Holiday Season

IPA is different from typical non-profits—our impact isn't just in the people we serve, but how we change the field. Our vision is a world with more evidence and less poverty, and we have seen that rigorous evidence can have outsized impact, by shifting philanthropic and aid dollars towards programs proven to work. This holiday season we're seeing more and more recognition of this.

WALL STREET JOURNAL

The Wall Street Journal's Weekend Investor this weekend featured a long piece titled "[Don't Let Your Charitable Donation go to Waste](#)" (ungated version [here](#)) about the importance of donors asking for evidence that a charity works before donating. They cite IPA's work in the field, quoting investor (and IPA board member) Ben Appen explaining:

"By applying the scientific method to economic development, organizations like IPA are contributing to a 'culture of doing more of what works and less of what doesn't work,' says Mr. Appen."



The news site Vox also recommended IPA twice. First in "These are the charities where your money will do the most good" they point out that IPA is a "meta charity," a charity that makes other charities work better. As they quote one donor:

"If they can turn a dollar of donations into substantially more than a dollar of increased donations to effective charities, isn't that the best use of my money?" asks Jeff Kaufman, a software developer who with his wife, Julia Wise, gives about half his income to effective charities and meta-charities."

A few days later Vox also suggested IPA as a vehicle for Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Pricilla Chan's announcement that they'll be giving away 99 percent of their wealth to charity, because:

"We don't know nearly everything we need to know about reducing poverty in the developing world. We also need to know more about how to do effective advocacy, about what interventions are effective at reducing existential risk, and so forth. That's a good argument for Zuckerberg and Chan to fund more research into how to make charity more effective."



FiveThirtyEight

Nate Silver's data journalism site, FiveThirtyEight used our results to point out why to trust data over fundraising brochures, using research on microloans led by IPA and our colleagues. Despite what the fundraisers suggest:

"None of the six studies found statistically significant increases in household income or spending. Four of the six found no change in food consumption; one found a modest increase and the sixth found a significant decrease."

And later the article suggests that figuring out what's not working isn't enough, the point of good work is to understand why a program isn't working and how to change it so it does:

"[Dean] Karlan went on to found Innovations for Poverty Action, a nonprofit organization that works with researchers to conduct studies that measure the impact of global anti-poverty programs. IPA is now working with organizations, including the microlender Kiva, to help them find ways to make their programs more effective."



THE LIFE YOU CAN SAVE

We were also thrilled that charity expert Peter Singer and his organization, The Life You Can Save, which focuses on giving to the most effective causes, included IPA on their "Best Charities of 2016" list just a few days ago. Some of the reasons we stood out to them:

"The quality of IPA's work stems from their emphasis on having experienced

international and local staff, and on developing long-term, meaningful relationships with governments, NGOs and private supporters. IPA advocates and consults with decision-makers to direct resources to the most promising solutions. They also more broadly share their findings through consulting, conferences, papers, etc. so the impact of their insights is multiplied many times over."

And finally, we know we've had an impact looking at this year's recommended charities list from GiveWell, who is renowned for their in-depth, data-based approaches to vetting charities for which do the most good. We're not on their list of [recommended charities of 2015](#), but our work has touched each one: [Giving away bednets](#), [deworming children](#) (the recommended group, Evidence Action was [spun off from IPA](#) to scale up our research findings in 2013), and GiveDirectly's [direct cash transfers to the poor](#). The latter built an [IPA evaluation](#) into their business plan so they would know their effectiveness early on, and has been extremely successful.

Collecting and using rigorous evidence often isn't the most popular or user-friendly part of the development field. IPA has over 500 people in 20 countries working hard gathering the highest quality data, and over [500 rigorous evaluations](#) so far, but you'll never see a picture of a surveyor in a rural village asking about household income on a (non-IPA) fundraising brochure. Yet seeing the results of our work influencing the conversation on effectiveness is very gratifying, bringing us closer to our vision of a world with more evidence and less poverty.

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