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IPA Launches Goldilocks Toolkit

IPA has conducted hundreds of randomized evaluations, learning not just whether programs work, but how they can work better. However, many organizations are not well-placed to engage in randomized evaluations. Either the timing for an impact evaluation is not right, resources or sample size are insufficient, the logistics make randomization infeasible, or the question to be answered simply isn't a question that a randomized evaluation helps to answer. Yet the desire to measure impact often leads organizations in one of two dangerous directions: collecting mountains of data that cannot be used to measure impact or collecting insufficient data to demonstrate accountability and to learn what to do in the future.

Seeing these challenges, two researchers - Mary Kay Gugerty and Dean Karlan - set out to identify a set of principles organizations could use to identify the right time to engage in impact evaluation, and - just as importantly - build systems that provide information that supports learning and improvement. The result is a set of Goldilocks principles, called the CART (Credible, Actionable, Responsible and Transportable) detailed in a forthcoming book, *The Goldilocks Challenge*.

Based on these principles, IPA launched the Goldilocks Initiative to complement our traditional randomized evaluation work and help find the right-fit between collecting too much data that doesn't get used and not collecting enough, to understand how to allocate limited funding for the greatest impact. The initiative provides resources and consulting services for organizations, donors, and governments in designing and supporting the implementation of cost-effective, appropriately-sized M&E systems.

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