Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is a research and policy non-profit that discovers and promotes effective solutions to global poverty problems. IPA designs, rigorously evaluates, and refines these solutions and their applications together with researchers and local decision-makers, ensuring that evidence is used to improve the lives of the world’s poor. Our well-established partnerships in the countries where we work, and a strong understanding of local contexts, enable us to conduct high-quality research. This research has informed hundreds of successful programs that now impact millions of individuals worldwide.

**What is a randomized evaluation?**
Randomized control trials (RCTs), randomized evaluations, rigorous evaluations, impact assessments are all a slightly complicated way of saying something really quite simple. If we want to know how effective a program is, we need to have a comparison group. Without a comparison, we are limited in our ability to know what would have happened without the program. And the only way of having an equitable comparison group is with random assignment.

**How do randomized evaluations work?**
In the simplest kind of study, the group we are looking at is divided randomly in two. One group receives a program or intervention, and the other does not. Since assignment to each group is random, everyone has equal probability of receiving the program or not.

**Why randomize?**
IPA uses randomized evaluations to measure impact because they provide the most credible and reliable way to learn what works and what does not. Randomized evaluations use the same methods frequently used in high quality medical research and rely on the random assignment of a program or policy to measure its impact on those that received the program compared to those who did not.
What do IPA partner organizations gain from their involvement in IPA projects?
IPA partners gain important insight into which of their interventions work or don’t work, and why, and also have the opportunity to adopt lessons learned from other innovative and proven programs. Additionally, IPA partners gain valuable experience when their interventions are rigorously evaluated and learn about how to use leading monitoring and evaluation methodologies.

What does IPA do other than randomized evaluations?
IPA strives to transform its findings and insights into action. We disseminate the evidence we generate to development practitioners and policy-makers, and, where appropriate, work closely with partners to facilitate the adaptation of effective programs to other areas of the world. For example, we worked with the Indian NGO Pratham and the Government of Ghana to replicate a successful Indian education program in Ghana, and we are continuing to support the scale up. In many cases, we also work with organizations to design the innovations that are later evaluated, such as a commitment savings product that encourages savings among bank clients in the Philippines. IPA is also developing the Goldilocks Initiative, which will 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.

Can organizations afford randomized evaluations?
Randomized evaluations cost less than people think. Evaluations, of course, can be expensive, but should be thought of as an investment in order to learn what programs work, and how to make real improvements. In the short run, randomized evaluations can cost less than some quasi-experimental evaluations because they allow for smaller sample sizes. In the long run, they save money because they provide more reliable information for improving operations and impact.

Why IPA?
- Experts in evaluation
  We are the largest implementer of randomized evaluations in the development field.
- Deep local presence
  Our country programs allow us to cultivate deep relationships needed for policy and research oversight.
- Policy relevant research
  We work with researchers and decision-makers to identify issues of national concern, then create and evaluate innovative solutions to those challenges.
- Research for impact
  From the design phase to the publication of results, we make evidence actionable.

IPA works to policy-makers and practitioners and disseminating knowledge about what works to policy-makers and practitioners around the world.