

IPA Philippines



Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is a research and policy non-profit that discovers and promotes effective solutions to global poverty problems. IPA brings together researchers and decision-makers to design, rigorously evaluate, and refine these solutions and their applications, ensuring that the evidence created is used to improve the lives of the world's poor. Since our founding in 2002, IPA has worked with over 400 leading academics to conduct over 600 evaluations in 51 countries. This research has informed hundreds of successful programs that now impact millions of individuals worldwide. Future growth will be concentrated in focus countries, such as the Philippines, 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 the Philippines, we have continued our global tradition of rigorous, applicable research by building foundational research capacity and conducting evaluations in areas of pressing national concern. Two completed evaluations offer promising insights into everyday issues that affect the lives of the Filipino poor. Our evidence has revealed:

FINANCE

Text message reminders to save encourages clients to make regular deposits. With over 1 billion text messages sent per day, the Philippines is known as the text message capital of the world. IPA found that those who were randomly assigned to receive a monthly savings reminder via text message increased their total amount

saved by six percent. IPA also studied the effectiveness of text message reminders as a tool for boosting repayment among micro-borrowers.

MIGRATION

Filipino migrants increase remittances when their transfers are intended for education. IPA researchers wanted to see if a new financial product, called EduPay, would provide migrant workers with greater ability to control the use of remittances for education. Some Filipino migrants working in Italy had the option of channeling a windfall lottery gain through EduPay as tuition payments directly to schools in the Philippines. Comparatively, they were allowed to simply attach a "label" to their transfers as intended for education.

IPA PHILIPPINES

Since 2003

FOCUS SECTORS

Agriculture, Financial Inclusion, Governance, Livelihoods, Small & Medium Enterprises

RESEARCH STUDIES

30 Completed, 18 in Progress

KEY PARTNERS

Asian Development Bank, Asian Institute of Management, Bank of the Philippine Islands Foundation, Inc., Centre for Economic Policy Research, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Development Bank of the Philippines, First Macro Bank, First Valley Bank, International Care Ministries (ICM), Millennium Challenge Corp., Philippine Crop Insurance Corp., Philippine Institute for Development Studies, Research Institute for Mindanao Culture, University of the Philippines

KEY RESEARCHERS

Dean Karlan (Yale University)
Dean Yang (University of Michigan)

We found that the labeling increased total transfers by 15.3 percent. Directly channeling the funds to schools resulted in an additional modest increase of 1.9 percent on top of the labeling. Moreover, the EduPay product was offered for actual remittances and a substantial number of intercepted migrants use it for their transfers with a take-up rate over 40 percent (under certain take-up measures).

Better Programs & Policies

IPA evidence has already contributed to improving millions of lives. Now, with ten years of evidence to build on, our programs are increasingly focusing on government and partner collaboration to translate evidence into better programs and policies.

AGRICULTURE

Can formalized property rights increase agricultural investment?

In collaboration with the Government of the Philippines, IPA is evaluating the impact of a parcelization program that subdivides collectively titled land and formalizes individual property rights. In particular, the evaluation will focus on understanding the constraints to investment in agriculture and the channels—such as access to credit, security of tenure, or more efficient land markets—through which formal property rights may allow for increased investment.

FINANCE

Rethinking the microcredit conversation. As microcredit received extensive praise as a failsafe solution for alleviating poverty, IPA studies have moved the discussion to a more realistic picture of what the impacts are for the poor. Our evidence shows that although some poor clients do benefit from access to capital, they are not all microentrepreneurs, nor do all of their economic activities yield high returns. As a result of this evidence, we are continuing to work with banks, microfinance institutions (MFIs), and other partners to design and evaluate new financial services that meet the truest needs of the poor.



Our Future

IPA Philippines is at an inflection point in its growth. We are transitioning from our early status as a young non-profit working in the development space into a go-to resource for evidence-based insights for government, nonprofits, and the private sector. As we navigate this transition, we are focusing on two goals. They are to:

- » **Reinforce IPA's status as a known source of high-quality research.** As one of the only organizations in the Philippines with the skills and capacity to conduct high-quality impact evaluations, we are in a strong position to merge our deep knowledge of local issues with our unparalleled research capability.
- » **Partner with decision-makers to seek, generate, and apply evidence at scale to help the poor.** Our IPA research affiliates and our local staff are a rich source of deep expertise and established relationships with local development organizations, academic institutions, and government agencies. We are working to expand those relationships by building policy considerations into all study designs, communicating what we know, and collaborating with partners in government and the private sector to apply it.

Building a world with **More Evidence** and **Less Poverty**.