

# Zambia



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 575 leading academics to conduct over 650 evaluations in 51 countries. Future growth will be concentrated in focus countries, such as Zambia, 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 Zambia, we have continued our global tradition of rigorous, applicable research by building foundational research capacity and conducting evaluations in areas of pressing national concern. Examples of our research below offer promising insights into everyday issues that affect the lives of the Zambian poor.

### AGRICULTURE

**Access to credit can help agricultural communities cope with lean seasons.** In the absence of formal credit markets, many farming households engage in costly coping strategies to make ends meet between harvests. In this study researchers examined the impact of access to seasonal credit on household wellbeing and agricultural output. They found that access to both food and cash loans during the lean season increased agricultural output and consumption, decreased off-farm labor, and increased local wages.

### HEALTH

**When recruiting community health workers, emphasizing career incentives rather than social incentives attracted workers who were more qualified and performed better on the job.** Workers recruited with career incentives conducted 29 percent more household visits and organized twice as many community meetings, while also seeing the same number of patients. In response, the Zambian Ministry of Health has begun using career incentives in its nationwide recruitment of community health workers.

**Providing families with simple, low-cost growth charts reduced malnutrition.** Giving parents full-sized growth charts to place on the wall in their homes, which included information about nutrition, increased child weight

**IPA ZAMBIA**  
Since 2010

**FOCUS SECTORS**  
Agriculture, Education, Governance, Health, Social Protection

**RESEARCH PROJECTS**  
16 Completed, 13 in Progress

**KEY PARTNERS**  
Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare, Ministry of General Education, Ministry of Health, National Food and Nutrition Council, Private Enterprise Programme Zambia, Public Service Management Division (Office of the President), Society for Family Health, Southern Water and Sewage Company, U.K. Department for International Development (DfID), UNICEF, United States Agency for International Development, University of Zambia, World Bank

**KEY RESEARCHERS**  
Nava Ashraf (London School of Economics), Oriana Bandiera (LSE), Günther Fink (Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute), Kelsey Jack (University of California, Santa Barbara), Peter Rockers (Boston University)

and reduced child stunting among children who were stunted before the study began. No impact was found for community-based monitoring, in which parents were invited to quarterly meetings to learn if their children had a healthy height and weight.

## Better Programs & Policies

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

**The Zambian Ministry of Education used results to inform its life skills curriculum.** Researchers working with IPA evaluated a curriculum called Girls Arise! which taught girls interpersonal skills for negotiating with authority figures in their lives. Based on initial results that the training improved girls' negotiation skills, the Zambian Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Centre integrated the negotiation training into their revised life skills and sexual health curriculum. A summarized version of the Girls Arise! curriculum was included in the revision, reaching all grade 8 pupils in government schools beginning in early 2016.

**The Zambian Ministry of Education will scale up an evidence-based program that teaches at the level of the student.** Building on over a decade of rigorous research around the world and two years of iterative learning in Zambia, the Ministry of General Education will scale up a program called Catch Up to approximately 1,800 schools over three years. Based on the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach pioneered by the Indian NGO Pratham, Catch Up aims to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills of students in grades 3–5. IPA-Zambia, J-PAL Africa, and several cooperating partners participated in the Ministry's working group, which developed the program's various components. IPA led an independent process monitoring of the pilot program, which took place in 80 schools during the 2016-2017 school year. The next phase will start in January 2018.



## Our Future

IPA Zambia is at an inflection point in its evolution as an organization. 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, non-profits, 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 Zambia 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. For example, we have trained CARE Zambia in using rigorous evaluations, and we are interested in designing more tailored workshops for other relevant organizations.
- » **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 and government agencies. For example, our long-standing partnership with the Ministry of Health through the efforts of Professor Nava Ashraf and our staff has led to evidence-based policy and the ministry using randomized evaluations in their work. We are working to expand such relationships by building policy considerations into all study designs, communicating what we know, and collaborating with decision-makers to apply it.

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

Contact [info-zambia@poverty-action.org](mailto:info-zambia@poverty-action.org) Visit [www.poverty-action.org/zambia](http://www.poverty-action.org/zambia)