

IPA Bangladesh



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 managed over 500 evaluations in 51 countries.

In 2010, IPA opened an office in Bangladesh to apply our tradition of rigorous, applicable research and gain insights into effective solutions for the country's poor. IPA Bangladesh has since collaborated with governments, NGOs, and world-renowned researchers on over 20 evaluations across sectors. Our 35 full-time employees—who boast diverse expertise in research and questionnaire design, field and data management, and research quality control—work on-the-ground in districts as far reaching as Rangpur, Barishal, and Kurigram to ensure the quality of every evaluation.

Key Findings

PROMOTING CLEANER COOKSTOVES

When promoting cleaner cookstoves, price discounts aren't enough: men need to see the value.

An IPA study found that women who cook show higher demand than men for new cookstoves that reduce indoor air pollution, but that women do not have the authority to make purchase decisions. Thus, few households buy cleaner stoves, even when offered a discount. These findings motivated us to consider whether products with features that appeal to men might help; a follow-on evaluation is testing whether cookstoves that have a built-in cell phone charger generate more demand.

IMPROVING LATRINE USE

A combination of subsidies and community motivation substantially increased latrine coverage. A community-motivation model that has been used in over 60 countries to increase use of hygienic latrines had no effect, yet latrine coverage expanded substantially when that model was combined with subsidies for hygienic latrines targeted to the poor.

ENCOURAGING EFFECTIVE MIGRATION

Paying travel costs encourages farmers to migrate for work – and the effect lasts for years. Giving farmers \$11 — enough to pay for travel costs — nearly tripled the percentage

IPA BANGLADESH

Since 2010

FOCUS SECTORS

Early Childhood Development
Garment Industry
Migration
Water & Sanitation

RESEARCH PROJECTS

9 Completed, 15 in Progress, 13 Under Development

KEY PARTNERS

3ie, Bangladesh Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh National Board of Revenue, University of California Berkeley, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, BRAC, DFID, ICDDR Bangladesh, IGC, MIT, Warwick University, Wateraid, Wellspring Advisors, World Bank, Yale University

KEY RESEARCHERS

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TEAM

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of farmers who migrated to cities for work during the agricultural off-season, and improved food security for the migrant's entire family. Even more compelling is the longer-term impact: the farmers received the incentive only once, and have continued to migrate for three subsequent years without the extra nudge.

Better Programs & Policies

IMPROVING WORKER WELL-BEING AND PRODUCTIVITY IN GARMENT FACTORIES

In collaboration with factories, we are learning how to improve both productivity and worker well-being. Workers who are unwell and line managers without effective techniques lead to low productivity. So how do we train line managers well and help factory workers in Bangladesh, who are often from other regions without local family networks, so that productivity can remain high? We are working closely with factories in the ready-made garment sector in Bangladesh to answer these pressing questions.

ENCOURAGING WORKERS TO SAVE VIA ELECTRONIC WAGE PAYMENTS

Does providing factory workers in Bangladesh with no-frills bank accounts or mobile money accounts encourage workers to save? We are working with a large commercial bank and one of Bangladesh's mobile money providers to offer accounts to workers in four garment factories in Dhaka to see if switching workers currently paid in cash to electronic payroll systems based on either bank or mobile money accounts encourage the use of formal financial services.



Photo: Maura Farrell

Work in Progress

IPA Bangladesh 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 that transition and continue to grow, our future work will continue in the garment, migration, and sanitation sectors, and will have a particular emphasis on early childhood development:

Focusing on pre-natal maternal care and improving early childhood curriculums. Together with BRAC in Bangladesh, we are developing a study that will determine the long-term impacts of a series of early childhood interventions. These will include a pre-natal evaluation, which will focus on improving the psychosocial and nutritional well-being of mothers, and evaluations for children ages 0-3 years and 3-6 years, which will focus on improving early childhood curriculums both at home and at childcare centers. We plan to follow a cohort of children from the pre-natal stage through childhood, and hopefully—depending on funding available—for even longer.

Our deep local presence allows us to cultivate the kinds of relationships needed for policy and research oversight. As one of the only social science organizations in Bangladesh with the skills and capacity to conduct randomized evaluations, we are in a strong position to merge our deep knowledge of local issues with our unparalleled research capability.

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

Contact info-bangladesh@poverty-action.org Visit www.poverty-action.org/bangladesh