

# Rwanda



Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is a research and policy nonprofit 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 to ensure that both the evidence created and data collected is used to improve the lives of the world's poor. We also empower our partners to strengthen their monitoring, learning, and evaluation capabilities. 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 Rwanda, 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 Rwanda, 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 work below offer promising insights into everyday issues that affect the lives of the Rwandan poor.

### HEALTH | SOCIAL PROTECTION

#### How do standard development programs compare to just giving people cash?

IPA Rwanda worked with researchers to rigorously evaluate the impact of unconditional cash transfers, compared to an integrated nutrition and WASH program, on dietary diversity, child and maternal anemia, child growth, wealth, and consumption, and other secondary outcomes. Neither the nutrition and WASH program nor the equivalent amount of cash impacted any of the main outcomes. A much larger cash transfer—of more than \$500 per household—had positive impacts on household dietary diversity, height-for-age, child mortality, consumption,

savings, assets, and home values. Another ongoing study is evaluating the impact of unconditional cash grants, compared to a youth training and education program, on incomes of vulnerable youth.

### HEALTH

#### Community health clubs improved some health behaviors, but didn't impact people's health or nutrition.

Poor sanitation leads to major diseases, increased public health expenditures, and causes childhood diarrhea, a leading cause of mortality in children under five. This study in western Rwanda found positive effects of community health clubs on some household level intermediate outcomes within villages that received the full intervention, but these effects did not translate into improvement in individuals' health or nutrition.

### AGRICULTURE

**How can we improve the sustainability of irrigation systems?** Investing in large-scale irrigation systems may improve

## IPA RWANDA

Since 2013

### FOCUS SECTORS

Agriculture  
Education  
Finance  
Health  
Social Protection

### RESEARCH PROJECTS

9 Completed, 4 in Progress

### KEY PARTNERS

Government of Rwanda, Educate!, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Education Development Center, GiveDirectly, International Growth Centre, Nuru Energy, U.S. Agency for International Development, University of Cape Town (UCT), University of California, Berkeley, World Bank – DIME

### KEY RESEARCHERS

Moussa Blimpo (World Bank), Craig McIntosh (University of California, San Diego), Maria Jones (DIME), Florence Kondylis (DIME), Todd Pugatch (Oregon State University), Pieter Serneels (University of East Anglia), Martine Visser (UCT), Andrew Zeitlin (Georgetown University)

the lives of small-scale farmers who otherwise depend on rain-fed agriculture. However, sustainability and coordination problems often plague large-scale irrigation schemes. This study is evaluating the impact of irrigation on farming practices and farmer welfare and comparing group management structures. This research has the potential to inform the Ministry of Agriculture's policies to improve use and coordination of irrigation systems.

## Better Programs & Policies

IPA evidence has already contributed to improving millions of lives. Now, with 15 years of evidence to build on, our programs are increasingly focusing on government and partner collaboration to translate evidence into better programs and policies.

### EDUCATION

**IPA is partnering with the Rwanda Education Board to identify effective ways to improve student learning and inform education policy.** Rwanda is one of the top-performing countries in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of access to education. However, the rapid expansion in access has put a strain on the education system. Recruiting and retaining qualified, skilled, and motivated teachers to improve education quality is therefore a priority for Rwanda. IPA has partnered with the Rwanda Education Board to evaluate how different types of pay-for-performance contracts in public schools impact student learning outcomes. The results may inform the government's decision to adapt teacher contracts nationwide.

### FINANCE

**IPA partnered with the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank to evaluate the Financial Education through Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) program.** Well-designed financial education programs have the potential to improve financial knowledge and behavior, leading to improvements in wellbeing. In partnership with the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance, IPA evaluated the impact of financial education delivered through SACCOs and found that when SACCOs were able to choose trainers from the local community, SACCO members attended more sessions and improved their financial knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. However, when trainer profiles were predetermined and limited to individuals with formal roles at the SACCO, these improvements were not observed. No improvements in either group were found on account usage, borrowing behavior, or financial security.



PHOTO: TOM GILKS

## Our Future

IPA Rwanda is at an inflection point in its growth. We are transitioning from our early status as a young nonprofit 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.** We continue to bring our expertise in high-quality impact evaluations to Rwanda, providing the capacity to run rigorous evaluations across sectors. We work together with knowledgeable government and academic partners through the concept and design stage to ensure that the evidence provides rigorous, meaningful results for decision-makers.
- » **Partner with decision-makers to seek, generate, and apply evidence at scale to help the poor.** IPA will work together with our close partner, the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), to train policymakers on what kind of evidence is needed in which decisions, how to determine what evidence is rigorous, and how to use evidence to guide programs and policies. We seek to work together with Rwandan and international researchers to both provide opportunities for local academics to build and apply their skills and to make our evidence more relevant to the local policy context. IPA also supports decision-makers in applying this evidence along the path to scale.

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

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

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