(Senior) Research Associate

Summary

IPA Sierra Leone is seeking a highly motivated and qualified individual with outstanding project management, data analysis, people management, and communication skills as a (Senior) Research Associate to support the implementation of the Sees to Learn Sierra Leone (SL2) program. This project is lead by CO-PIs Paul Glewwe (University of Minnesota), Nathan Congdon (Queens University Belfast), Brooke Krause (College of Wooster), Aine McCarthy (Lewis & Clark College), Lindsey Novak (Reed College), Samantha Robler (University of Arkansas), and Jalika Mustapha (Ministry of Health and Sanitation Sierra Leone). In close coordination with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, this project will include three studies to evaluate different vision testing services and understand the impact of eyeglasses on educational outcomes among students in and around Freetown and Bo City. In the first study, IPA will lead a cluster randomized controlled trial (cRCT) to assess the educational impact of providing free ready-made or custom eyeglasses to students aged 12-15. The second study will examine the use of simplified, one-size-fits-all DOT glasses on a subset of the students in the cRCT. Lay people, such as teachers, can use DOT glasses kits to test vision and dispense glasses with limited training, giving DOT glasses the potential to be a cost-effective, scalable solution in countries without trained vision care specialists and ophthalmological equipment. The final study will assess the educational impact of providing corrective eyeglasses to farsighted students in rural primary schools and test the effectiveness of low-cost technologies, such as a laser-etched near vision chart, in detecting farsightedness in comparison to using standard, but more expensive, dilation eye drops.

These three studies will generate critical evidence to support the design of a national school vision screening and eyeglasses program in Sierra Leone and throughout the region, build off past research illustrating the impact of the SICI program and develop a genuine pathway to scale and governmental ownership. The (Senior) Research Associate position is a unique opportunity to combine significant project management experience with involvement in cutting-edge development research on a growing and passionate IPA Sierra Leone team. As an ideal candidate, you not only have a solid technical foundation in impact evaluation methodology, but you can also independently guide and direct the activities that happen both upstream and downstream of any rigorous, randomized evaluation. You enjoy contributing to high-performing teams that drive the production of the highest quality research for our clients and partners. You excel in solving problems using clear, strategic, and creative thinking. You have a strong social acumen and are excited about the opportunity to broaden, deepen, and manage meaningful relationships with high-level clients and partners across the public, academic, non-governmental, and multilateral sectors.
Responsibilities

- Coordinate research and implementation efforts with all relevant stakeholders;
- Recruiting, training and supervising field-based teams;
- Refining and piloting survey questionnaires;
- Supervising and monitoring data collection to ensure high-quality of the data; Supporting data quality checks and fixing issues with data collected during data collection;
- Assisting in data cleaning and preliminary analysis and ensuring ready access to all data for researchers and/or supervisors;
- Documenting in detail all activities related to the project;
- Maintaining accurate records of interviews, safeguarding the confidentiality of subjects, as necessary;
- Preparing high-quality progress and results reports to Principal Investigators (PI), research partners, and funding agencies, and sharing them timely;
- Providing timely updates and responses to partner organizations, and participating in meetings with key stakeholders; Providing training and supervision for research project staff (Field Manager);
- Managing project finances including budgeting, expense tracking, and financial reporting;
- Ensuring that all team members follow necessary protocols and procedures;
- Handling day to day PI and partner communications;
- Any other task as assigned by the Associate Research Manager Country Director;
- Keep the Country Director and Associate Research Manager apprised of all developments in the project and serve as the key link between the field staff, research team, and Principal Investigators.
- Support the country office in project and policy development as needed

Qualifications

- Education: Bachelor's degree in economics, public policy, or other quantitative social science disciplines;
- Quantitative Skills: Strong technical understanding of economics and econometrics. Demonstrated proficiency in Stata, and experience with data management, data cleaning, and regression analysis
- A minimum of 2-year of work experience is required.
- Ability to collaborate among geographically and culturally diverse teams to drive common goals
- Interculturally-versed to build capacity, work with, and live in Sierra Leone;
- Excellent management and organizational skills;
- Ability to successfully completing assigned tasks and meeting deadlines;
- Communication Skills: Attention to detail and advanced writing and presentation skills;
- Language: English fluency required;
- Experience with public health interventions a plus.
Preferred Qualifications:

- Master's degree in economics, public policy, or other quantitative social science disciplines. Experience managing field staff in developing countries strongly preferred; A roll-up-your-sleeves and ‘get it done’ attitude: maintains focus, measures progress and outcomes, and ensures accountability.
- Great communicator: clearly and succinctly conveys information and ideas in a variety of situations, communicating in a focused and compelling way that drives others’ thoughts and actions.
- Entrepreneurial spirit: takes calculated risks, offers fresh ideas and approaches to create greater value, impact and differentiation.
- Positive approach: demonstrates a poised, credible, and confident demeanor that reassures others, commands respect, and conveys an image that is consistent with IPA’s core values even when faced with difficult situations.
- Quality orientation: accomplishes work by considering all areas involved, no matter how detailed, shows concern for all aspects of the job, accurately checks processes and tasks, and ensures high quality outputs.
- Data-driven leadership: is committed to the generation and use of data to inform policy design and tactical decision-making.
- Team collaboration: can work together with a diverse team to drive a central goal while also being able to handle individual work streams independently.

Application Instructions

Apply now

About IPA

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 and their applications, ensuring that the evidence created is used to improve the lives of the world’s poor. In recent decades, trillions of dollars have been spent on programs designed to reduce global poverty, but clear evidence on which programs succeed is rare, and when evidence does exist, decision-makers often do not know about it. IPA exists to bring together leading researchers and these decision-makers to ensure that the evidence we create leads to tangible impact on the world. Since its founding in 2002, IPA has worked with over 600 leading academics to conduct over 900 evaluations in 52 countries. This research has informed hundreds of successful programs that now impact millions of individuals worldwide.

IPA’s Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)

As an organization, IPA is dedicated to improving the lives of the world’s most vulnerable populations through evidence and policy. We also recognize how important it is for our staff to reflect the diversity of the places where we work and the communities we work with. As such, IPA is committed to hiring from a diverse pool of candidates, from a range of
backgrounds, beliefs, experiences, and perspectives. We know that this makes our work stronger and more responsive to the challenges faced by those we work with and for and we encourage people from historically underrepresented groups to apply. Click here to learn more about IPA’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Innovations for Poverty Action is an affirmative action equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or any other protected class. IPA will endeavor to make a reasonable accommodation to a qualified applicant with a disability unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of our business. If you believe you require such assistance to complete this form or to participate in an interview, please contact us at jobs@poverty-action.org or via phone at 1-202-386-6200. The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of the work to be performed by the specified position. The statements are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible duties, tasks, and responsibilities. Management reserves the right to amend and change responsibilities to meet organizational needs as necessary. Please note that IPA will never request any form of payment from an applicant. Applicants are encouraged to confirm the information listed above with IPA prior to releasing any extensive personal information to the organization. Please direct questions to jobs@poverty-action.org.

** Please note that only qualified applicants will be contacted by the hiring manager.

**Reports to**

Associate Research Manager

**Deadline to apply**

Rolling basis

**Desired start date**

June 1, 2023

**City**

Freetown

**Country**

Sierra Leone