

Researchers

Gharad Bryan
London School of Economics and Political Science

Jonathan de Quidt
Institute for International Economic Studies

Dean Karlan
Northwestern University

Christopher Udry
Northwestern University

Staff

Emma Davies
Senior Research Associate

Rene Marlon Panti
Research Manager

Tara Marwah
Senior Policy Manager

Jose Edgardo Rivera
Policy Associate

Sneha Stephen
Senior Research Manager

Timeline

2024-2025

Study Status

In Progress

Study Type

Randomized Evaluation

Sample Size

6,075 households in 405 barangays

Research Implemented by IPA

No

Combining Cash Grants with an Ultra-Poor Livelihoods Training Program in the Philippines



A farming family in the Philippines © IPA Philippines

Researchers are partnering with IPA Philippines and International Care Ministries to conduct a randomized evaluation in the Philippines to assess whether combining a livelihoods training program with cash grants of varying sizes and business investment approaches enhances economic outcomes for ultra-poor households.

In the Western Visayas Region of the Philippines, nearly 50 thousand families grapple with the challenge of affording basic food needs,¹ underscoring the urgent need for effective poverty alleviation strategies. To address this pressing issue, International Care Ministries (ICM) is leveraging the Philippines Socioeconomic Panel Survey (PSPS) to assess the impact of a 12-month group-based program called Transform designed to improve economic outcomes for ultra-poor households. Led by local pastors and ICM staff, Transform offers participating households comprehensive training sessions covering livelihoods, health, and values.

Researchers from the Global Poverty Research Lab at Northwestern University are partnering with IPA Philippines and International Care Ministries to conduct a randomized evaluation to measure the Transform program's impact on households and its cost-effectiveness relative to other ultra-poor graduation programs. In addition, researchers are delivering cash grants of varying sizes to participants for business investment individually or in groups to assess which approach enhances economic outcomes the most. A total of 6,075 households across 405 communities in the Western Visayas region have been randomly assigned to the following

groups:

1. **Small Grant to Groups (81 communities):** Participants will receive the Transform program over 12 months, including livelihoods training. They will also receive a small cash grant of 6,000 Philippine Pesos (USD 108) initially and P3,000 (USD 54) as a follow-up grant to be shared among a group of three.
2. **Large Grant to Individuals (81 communities):** Participants will receive the Transform program over 12 months, including livelihoods training. Participants will receive a large individual cash grant of P11,000 (USD 197).
3. **Large Grant to Individuals with Encouraged Groups (81 communities):** Participants will receive the Transform program and receive a P11,000 individual cash grant. Additionally, they will be encouraged, but not required, to form groups and combine their grants towards a joint business venture.
4. **Comparison Group (162 communities):** Participants will not receive any intervention.

The results of this evaluation will be available in 2026.

Sources

¹ [Philippines Statistics Authority. 2020. Special Release: Poverty Statistics Among Families in Western Visayas](#)

Research Partner


Northwestern
GLOBAL POVERTY
RESEARCH LAB

Global Poverty Research Lab (GPRL), Northwestern University

Implementing Partner

