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Some highlights from the IPA Impact and Policy Conference + is proof of concept policy relevant?

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At the end of August I gave several presentations at the IPA Impact and Policy Conference in Bangkok, which had days on SME development, Governance and Post-Conflict recovery, and Financial Inclusion. The agenda is [here](#). There was a good mix of new results from studies that don't yet have papers, along with more polished work on the conference topics. One innovative part were matchmaking sessions that tried to put policymakers and NGOs together with researchers to test ideas of mutual interest – I'll look forward to seeing if any of these studies make it to completion.

A few highlights in terms of work that was new to me:

Daniel Paravisini presented some [joint work](#) with Antoinette Schoar in which they conducted an experiment with a bank in Colombia that lends to small enterprises. Before the experiment, only 89 percent of loan decisions would get made by a lower level committee, with loan decisions being sent up the hierarchy or out for more information seeking for the rest (both of which are costly for the bank). They randomly introduce **credit scoring** to different branches and find that introducing credit scores leads to more decisions being made by the lower level committee, with no change in loan size approved or loan performance – which they find some evidence to support this being due to reducing agency problems between the lower level committee and higher management.

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