



# Displaced Livelihoods Initiative

Call for Proposals

April 2026

displaced  
livelihoods  
initiative

**ipa** Innovations for  
Poverty Action

**J-PAL**  
ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL POVERTY ACTION LAB

# Acknowledgments

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# Disclaimer

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# Photos

Front Cover: A Rohingya refugee entrepreneur at the chili paste business she runs from her home in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. © 2017 Shutterstock / Krisha Vishinpir

Back Cover: In Foca Izmir, Turkey a Syrian refugee woman works in the production of sun-dried tomatoes. © 2016 Shutterstock / Ilknur Sen

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# I. Overview

Displacement is at an all-time high and is projected to climb in the coming decades. There is limited rigorous evidence, however, about how to best respond to displacement and strengthen outcomes for displaced and host communities. What is more, even when effective programs and policies are identified and evaluated, decision-makers often struggle to determine how to use that evidence for impact at scale. Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) are actively working to fill these evidence-to-policy-and-practice gaps.

Through the Displaced Livelihoods Initiative (DLI), supported by the IKEA Foundation, IPA and J-PAL will generate and share new evidence on the impacts of livelihoods programs for displaced populations and host communities, in part by funding impact evaluations and related research through regular calls for proposals. This document covers the aims, scope, research and learning priorities, and types of research funded by DLI through these calls. The fund aims to support generalizable, policy-relevant impact evaluations and related research that will advance our understanding of the problem and solutions, as well as bolster the infrastructure available for research and support impact at scale.

**DLI's fifth call for proposals is now open.** DLI accepts proposals for rigorous impact evaluations, pilots, exploratory studies, infrastructure and public goods projects, evidence use, and conference travel to inform policies and programs on sustainable livelihoods for displaced populations and host communities. The target group for this initiative is displacement-affected populations, including refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless populations, others in refugee-like situations, internally displaced populations (IDPs), and host communities. More information on scope and project types can be found in sections III and VI, below. **Mandatory expressions of interest are due Friday, May 15, 2026, and proposals are due Friday, July 24, 2026.**

# II. Motivation

Due to conflict, natural disasters, and other humanitarian crises, displacement is increasingly protracted, with displaced populations frequently spending over half a decade in limbo, unable to return home. Growing recognition of the protracted nature of humanitarian crises has pushed the international donor, practitioner, and researcher communities to seek more cost-effective, long-term solutions to displacement. The 2018 Global Compact for Refugees and the 2019 Global Refugee Forum, for example, emphasized the need for greater investment in refugee self-reliance, livelihoods, and economic inclusion.

Livelihoods programming, which supports displaced populations to access employment opportunities and meaningfully integrate into local labor markets, is core to the integration of displaced populations into their new homes ([UNHCR, 2022](#)). Displaced populations, however, often face both legal and non-legal barriers to obtaining sustainable livelihoods and economic inclusion ([Ginn et al., 2022](#)). In

these varied and complex contexts, more research is needed to identify impactful, cost-effective, and durable programs and policies to support displaced populations to rebuild their lives and achieve self-reliance.

To date, there is little rigorous research from displacement-affected contexts, and few published impact evaluations of programs for displaced populations ([IPA, 2023](#); [J-PAL, 2022](#)). In contrast, there are hundreds of impact evaluations on livelihoods-related topics within [IPA](#) and [J-PAL](#)'s portfolios alone. That said, the evidence base on displaced livelihoods is growing, and there are recently published or ongoing impact evaluations on a range of topics, including job search assistance, graduation, internships and skills certifications, cash transfers to micro-enterprises, and the psychosocial value of employment for displaced populations ([Caria et al., 2021](#); [Brune et al., forthcoming](#); [Loiacono and Silva-Vargas, forthcoming](#); [Hassan et al., 2022](#); [Hussam et al., 2022](#)). There is also emerging evidence on the efficacy of programs that target trauma-related mental barriers relevant for displaced populations, such as risk-aversion and short-term thinking, which can limit the impacts of livelihoods interventions ([Ashraf et al., forthcoming](#); [Meyer et al., forthcoming](#)).

In addition to the impact evaluation literature, there is a broader literature on displaced livelihoods (see, for example, [Verme and Schuettler, 2021](#); [JDC, 2023](#)), some of which sheds light on the potential benefits displacement on host economies. In particular, [Verme and Schuettler](#)'s work highlights that “forced displacement has either a positive or non-significant effect on employment or wages of host communities” in a range of displacement-affected contexts.

More broadly, there is a wider evidence base from non-displacement contexts on livelihoods, including on building household resilience, mitigating barriers to employment, supporting entrepreneurs, women's economic empowerment, access to financial products, and expanding market access. While there is mixed evidence on some programs, like microcredit, there is promising evidence on others, such as cash for household resilience and access to finance for business outcomes. More research is needed, though, to understand the effectiveness of disaggregated components of bundled programs like technical and vocational training and graduation ([J-PAL, 2023](#), [Banerjee et al., 2015](#)).

A word of caution: the learnings from this broader evidence base on livelihoods may apply in displacement-affected contexts, but given the range of barriers specific to displaced populations, some will not. Barriers include mismatched skills or lack of skills certification, disrupted social networks, lack of information on legal status in the country, depleted assets or capital due to displacement, imperfect market information, lower levels of health, higher levels of impaired social functioning and decision-making, and discrimination towards displaced populations ([Fasani et al. 2018](#); [Loiacono and Silva-Vargas 2019](#); [Schuettler and Caron, 2020](#)). These barriers can lead to difficulty integrating into the labor market, earning comparable wages to host populations despite similar education and professional backgrounds, underemployment, and professional downgrading ([Schuettler and Caron, 2020](#)). What is more, the efficacy of various programs (e.g. job training) may be weakened by other market forces, which could be particularly present in the fragile economies often hosting displaced populations ([J-PAL, 2022](#)).

Further research is needed to understand in what contexts and for whom livelihoods programs are most effective, and to determine how programs should be designed with the needs, preferences, and desires of displaced populations in mind. To this end, future research that is co-led with, co-created with, or informed by people with lived experiences of displacement would be valuable. Understanding the theories of change specific to effective livelihoods interventions for displaced populations, under-studied sub-populations (e.g. women, youth, differently-abled), and host communities, as well as the differential impacts of interventions on these groups, will also be valuable to closing the evidence gap on displaced livelihoods.

### III. Scope

Given the gap in rigorous evidence on the causal links between interventions and sustainable livelihoods outcomes for displaced and host communities, DLI will support innovation and generalizable learning on program effectiveness, the mechanisms underpinning programming, and the barriers to impact, or contribute to exploratory work, piloting, or new tools and data to support future impact evaluation research, with the following focus:<sup>1</sup>

#### Target Group: Displacement-affected Populations

In line with general practice among the decision-makers within the Displaced Livelihoods Initiative's field of work (see, for example, [UNHCR, 2022](#)), for the purpose of this initiative, the following groups are considered "displacement-affected":

- Displaced populations in need of international protection—refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless populations—as well as internally displaced populations and others in refugee-like situations, whether this be (for example) to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural- and human-made disasters;
- The communities hosting the displaced.

Acknowledging that the reality of displacement is complex, proposals addressing mixed migration flows may be in scope if they successfully outline how results could be leveraged to inform future livelihoods-related policies and interventions addressing specific barriers to sustainable livelihoods for displacement-affected populations, examples of which are detailed above.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to Section VI for a comprehensive list of project types that DLI can support.

<sup>2</sup> For our purposes, we understand a mixed migration flow as "[a] movement in which a number of people are travelling together, generally in an irregular manner, using the same routes and means of transport, but for different reasons. People travelling as part of mixed movements have varying needs and profiles and may include asylum seekers, refugees, trafficked persons, unaccompanied/separated children, and migrants in an irregular situation" ([IOM, 2019](#)).

We encourage applicants to disaggregate results by displacement status (refugee, IDP, returnee, stateless person, host community member, etc.) and/or place or community of origin. We additionally encourage disaggregation, where applicable, by other relevant factors, including gender, duration of displacement, age, ability, and location (e.g. in/out-of-camp, rural, urban, etc.). Such disaggregation may help us learn about the added value of tailoring livelihoods programs to specific sub-groups, which could be particularly valuable in contexts where supporting host and displaced communities equally is standard practice, or where programs are very broadly targeted.

## Topic: Sustainable Livelihoods

Livelihoods can be defined as the “capabilities, assets including both material and social resources, and activities required for a means of living” (DFID, 1999). Put simply, livelihoods are the resources and activities that allow people to live (Women’s Refugee Commission, 2009). A livelihood is sustainable when individuals and households can cope with and recover from the stress and shocks of changing circumstances. Livelihoods programming typically aims to improve economic outcomes including household income, employment, and asset ownership, and other outcomes like food security.

However, the goals of livelihoods programs can be broader, and are increasingly seen through the lens of self-reliance: the social and economic ability of an individual, household, and community to meet their needs sustainably (Leeson, 2020). Promoting social inclusion and well-being is also tied to self-reliance. Shifts in social outcomes can act as potential pathways to ensure that economic outcomes are more durable, including changes in perceptions and attitudes, shifts in inter- and intra-group social cohesion, improvements to health and well-being, and strengthening social and economic networks. To that end, we welcome proposals that shed light on these mechanisms for fostering sustainable livelihoods for displacement-affected populations.

## IV. Research and Learning Priorities

This section provides a list of indicative research areas and questions related to the livelihoods of displacement-affected populations that proposals may address. Rather than simply framing their study within this incomplete list of questions, which may also be combined with one another and are not mutually exclusive, we encourage applicants to link their research to questions that they believe are of fundamental importance to our understanding of sustainable livelihoods for displacement-affected populations. As illustrated by many of the questions listed, we welcome research on the complementarities between interventions, ways to optimize the sequence of interventions, or learnings that will help prioritize resource allocation given limited budgets.

We also recognize that a majority of the questions below focus on interventions and impact.

Questions asked in exploratory work and infrastructure and public goods projects, in particular, may be at a slightly earlier stage, more descriptive, or methodological in nature. We encourage

researchers submitting proposals for these projects to consider how their work may allow or enable future impact evaluations to ask the questions below.

## Research Areas

### Resilience

Displacement represents a major turning point in an individual's trajectory, often associated with stretches of mental, social, and economic hardship. More research is needed on the interventions and mechanisms that effectively support individuals and households to recover from displacement as a multidimensional shock and adapt to their new situation, and on how this recovery and adaptation may accelerate or augment livelihood outcomes. Questions could include:

- Does access to **social services and protection schemes** affect labor market participation over time? Where displaced populations have access to social services and protection schemes, how can uptake be encouraged?
- How do **unconditional cash transfers** before, alongside, or independent from livelihoods interventions affect employment or entrepreneurship outcomes? Can this impact be traced back to specific mediators, such as the ability to cope with shocks, improved mental health, or access to capital?
- To what extent can **mental health and psychosocial support** interventions improve both well-being and labor market outcomes? To what extent can livelihoods interventions improve mental health as a pathway to longer-term labor market outcomes? What intervention types are most effective at impacting these outcomes (e.g. mental health, employment-first, integrated, etc.)?
- What effect do **housing programs** have on the economic trajectories of displaced populations?
- How can **financial inclusion** programs, such as commitment savings or access to credit, improve displaced household resilience and livelihoods?
- Given families, other core social units, and wider networks are often eroded during displacement, how can interventions support the development of **social networks** for refugees and IDPs? Are such interventions effective at improving social inclusion and livelihood outcomes? Especially when social safety nets are not available to displaced populations, can inclusion in social networks help displaced populations recover and adapt to their new situations?
- How do livelihoods programs contribute to future household **shock resilience**? Are there certain livelihoods programs (e.g. wage employment vs. agriculture) that are more shock resistant than others?
- Does delivering the same intervention at **different points on a displaced person's journey** have different impacts on shock resilience and livelihood outcomes?
- How do livelihoods programs affect other members of the household? How does the availability of accessible **childcare and/or early childhood development programming** affect caregivers' employment and intra-household inequalities in displaced communities?

Can dual-generation programming, that targets both children and caregivers, augment household resilience, early-childhood development, and livelihood outcomes?

## Wage Employment

Access to wage employment can provide displaced people with a steady income, opportunities for skills and career development, and social inclusion. However, access to formal wage employment is often limited for displaced populations due to legal restrictions, discrimination, lack of social networks, and other barriers. In both formal and informal employment, displaced persons may also face exploitation and poor working conditions. There is a need for research to better understand the factors that enable or hinder access to wage employment for displaced populations, as well as the economic and social outcomes of such employment. Questions could include:

- How can **barriers** to entry into the (formal) labor market—such as lack of information, access to capital, training, cultural norms, and mobility restrictions—be overcome? How can discrimination against displaced job seekers be mitigated in both formal and informal labor markets?
- How can business owners be incentivized to **formalize informal jobs** for displaced populations, where possible? What is the impact of formalization on livelihoods and protection outcomes?
- What are the most effective strategies for addressing any **skills gap** between displaced populations and the local labor market demand? How can vocational education and training programs be tailored to the specific needs of displaced populations to ensure their successful integration into the labor market?
- What are the most effective strategies for **job matching** to increase the employment outcomes of displaced populations? How might such strategies differ from successful strategies for host community members?
- What is the impact of **skills accreditation and certification** on the labor market access of displaced populations?
- What are the impacts of displaced persons' employment on local markets and the **private sector**? How can firms be encouraged to create jobs, hire, and support skills development for displaced populations? How does the decision of firms to employ (or not employ) displaced workers impact their productivity and efficiency, and what strategies can encourage inclusive hiring practices?
- What is the impact of **labor mobility** on livelihood outcomes? In places where displaced populations have the right to work and move, how can they be connected with job opportunities or markets in places other than where they currently reside? What are the impacts of such interventions on cross-border movements or markets?

## Entrepreneurship

Displaced populations commonly start businesses, whether formal or informal, as a way to provide for their households. While there is a broader evidence base on the benefits of entrepreneurship

programs in lower- and middle-income countries (see, for example, [IPA, 2021](#)), there is little research about their impacts on sustainable livelihoods, long-term economic inclusion, poverty reduction, and social cohesion for displaced populations. Questions could include:

- Who should entrepreneurship programs **target** when trying to create profitable enterprises? What are the characteristics of successful displaced entrepreneurs? Considering that entrepreneurship may often be a fallback option in a context with high barriers to employment, when should entrepreneurship programs be prioritized?
- How can displaced entrepreneurs be supported to overcome the **barriers** they face, such as lack of information, limited access to capital, mobility restrictions, disrupted social networks, lack of options to formalize the business, and discrimination?
- What is the **impact of trauma** on decisions made by entrepreneurs? Can mental health and psychosocial support interventions augment the effects of entrepreneurship programming? To what extent is there a risk that successful aspiration setting—as is often encouraged in cognitive behavioral therapy or other positive imagery programming—backfires when ventures fail, given the additional barriers to economic inclusion that displaced persons need to overcome?
- How can displaced populations **access needed resources** to start and grow their businesses, including start-up capital, credit, insurance, training, digital technologies, and mentorship?
- What are the impacts of displaced businesses on **local value chains, food systems, and markets**, and how can positive impacts be maximized? What are the most effective market-support interventions for creating an enabling environment for displaced businesses, such as facilitating access to new markets?
- What are the main challenges that displaced entrepreneurs face in **accessing markets**, and how can they be addressed? How can programs effectively support the most common types of businesses started by displaced populations?
- In what ways does **cash-based assistance** for displaced populations support both displaced businesses and local economies?
- How do **social networks** affect access to information, resources, markets, and opportunities for displaced entrepreneurs? How can programs support displaced entrepreneurs to build social, economic, and financial networks that could support their businesses?
- How can **women entrepreneurs** be supported, given the particular barriers they face such as unsafe transportation, poor hygiene infrastructure, a lack of childcare, or restrictive social norms in their place of origin and/or refuge? How does the availability of accessible childcare and/or early childhood development programming affect caregiver entrepreneurship?

## Social Cohesion, Inclusion, and Norms

Understanding the relationship between livelihood outcomes and social and psychosocial outcomes for displaced populations, and vice versa, is crucial to developing effective and holistic policies and programs. Shifts in these outcomes—such as social cohesion, inclusion, norms, and networks—can

act as potential pathways to ensure that economic outcomes are more durable. Conversely, improved livelihoods may allow for improved social inclusion or cohesion. Questions could include:

- How can livelihoods programming be designed to maximize **social cohesion**, in addition to economic inclusion? How can greater social cohesion contribute to livelihood outcomes?
- What strategies can be employed to foster a **sense of belonging** among displaced people in new locations, and is this a pathway to economic inclusion? Can having a sustainable livelihood increase how connected a displaced person feels to their new community?
- Can livelihoods programs improve host community **perceptions, attitudes, or behaviors** toward displaced populations? Can they improve displaced populations' attitudes or behaviors towards host community members? What are the impacts of new shocks, such as natural disasters or new waves of displacement, on any social cohesion gains?
- What is the impact of (real or perceived) **resource competition** between host and displaced communities on both livelihoods and social outcomes? What is the optimal program model to generate returns for both and/or support better (natural) resource management and regeneration?
- How do **social networks** impact the labor market integration of displaced populations, and how can networks be leveraged and augmented for greater economic and social inclusion?
- How do **social and cultural norms**, either in their country of origin or refuge, impact displaced populations' livelihoods opportunities and outcomes?
- How can the **potential negative impacts on segments of host communities** be mitigated, be they real or perceived, short or long-term? (See, for example, [Verme and Schuettler, 2021](#) for a nuanced discussion of at-risk populations and timeframes.)

## Rights and Regulations

Laws and regulations in the host country significantly shape the lived realities of displaced and host communities, their economic opportunities and wellbeing, as well as interactions between groups. More research is needed both on the way that legal frameworks and displacement status constrain displaced livelihoods, and on the effects of more permissive legal frameworks on livelihood outcomes for affected populations, as well as broader society. Questions could include:

- How can the extension of **legal status or regularization programs**—which grant some displaced populations (temporary) residency, access to social services, and/or the right to work—augment economic outcomes and decrease negative coping strategies? How can these programs be designed to maximize uptake, or what complementary interventions are needed to do so?
- How does (legal) uncertainty and lack of information about a group's current or future **legal status** impact economic activities? Are potential negative effects driven by employers' or displaced persons' expectations?
- Can **lifting barriers to movement** (e.g. legal restrictions, prohibitive transportation costs, or social protection or parallel cash transfer schemes tied to a sub-national location) within a country or region affect the target groups' choice of location, outcomes, job status, or self-

reliance? What other factors shape displaced populations' mobility choices? How do encampment policies alter the effects of large-scale displacement on host economies?

- How can livelihoods responses be effectively integrated into **broader government social safety nets**?
- What is the impact of **host attitudes** on legal rights for displaced populations, and can livelihoods interventions increase host support for legal rights, status, and/or regularization?
- How does the availability of **digital identification** affect access to services and economic outcomes for displaced and host communities, and IDPs in particular?
- What **policies and regulatory frameworks** are effective in formalizing wage employment for displaced populations and/or displaced businesses? How can social safety nets and other forms of support be used to promote job creation and reduce unemployment in displaced populations? What are the impacts of increased enterprise formalization on the creation of refugee-led businesses and market access?
- In situations where the **rights of displaced populations are constrained**, what livelihoods are possible for displaced populations? How can alternative payment schemes or contracts be designed to provide livelihoods support in a given environment (e.g. incentive payments or stipends)? What kind of contracts or jobs are the most beneficial?
- How can livelihoods programs ensure they are upholding the rights of **unaccompanied children**, and not contributing to **child labor**?

## Measurement and Design

Given the vulnerability of the population, the limited impact evaluation research, and the challenges to doing research in displacement-affected contexts, thoughtful research design and measurement are necessary when researching the above topic areas. To that end, we encourage research teams to consider the following when designing impact evaluations and/or infrastructure and public goods studies:<sup>3</sup>

- How can the many challenges associated with **identifying and connecting** with vulnerable populations be overcome? Are certain groups excluded from standard sampling strategies? How can evaluators effectively keep in touch with populations on the move?
- What are the demographics of individuals or households who move in given settings, and how does this impact **program targeting**? Do whole families move together? How do the demographics of those who flee change over time?
- What **behavioral changes** might we expect to see from interventions, and how can evaluations be designed to measure these in addition to self-reported attitudes?
- What innovative **measurement strategies** (survey questions, modules, indicators, survey tools, etc.) can be implemented? What can innovative measurement allow us to

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<sup>3</sup> Please see the Annex for links to some measurement and design resources.

learn that we were unable to before? How can measurement account for the specificity and heterogeneity of displaced or host populations?

- How can advancements in **data science and technology** (e.g. machine learning, satellite imagery, and Artificial Intelligence) be leveraged to help us better measure impact or analyze results?
- What are the **disaggregated effects** of bundled interventions? We encourage the use of factorial designs to pinpoint which program components are driving impact.
- What are the **differential impacts** of interventions on different groups and vulnerable populations? For impact evaluations, we encourage measuring impacts for all groups that may experience the intervention differently, and disaggregating by gender, age, ability, location, displacement status, etc., when appropriate.
- What are the **long-term effects** of interventions on economic, social, and psychosocial outcomes? How can projects be designed to measure outcomes over time, and include meaningful intermediate measures such as attitudes or job search behavior?
- In addition to fulfilling the standard ethics requirements for human subjects research, what additional **ethical considerations** should projects implement, in particular when working with highly vulnerable sub-groups? How can projects better integrate referral pathways into surveys when working with violence- and trauma-affected populations?

## V. Project Types

The Displaced Livelihoods Initiative will consider proposals for the following types of projects. Please choose the grant type that best represents your project stage.

- **Exploratory grants:** These grants are to develop preliminary research ideas, contributing to the development of proposals for pilots or full impact evaluations in future rounds. Activities may include travel, relationship development, descriptive or observational analysis, and data development or collection. (Maximum award: \$10,000)
- **Pilot studies:** These grants are for studies with clear research questions, identified interventions, and established partnerships, but which require substantial upfront investments in design, measurement, and/or implementation before a full impact evaluation can be designed and a full study proposal can be submitted. Activities could include A/B testing, testing intervention uptake to refine power calculations, developing new measurement strategies or instruments, analysis of existing data, piloting survey questions, refining the research logistics with the partner to make sure the research and program can be delivered as planned, and/or new data development or collection. Please note that these awards are for piloting research, not the intervention. (Maximum award: \$75,000)
- **Full studies:** These grants are for research projects with a clear research question, committed implementing partner(s), well-defined research designs, and statistical power estimates. While most of the impact evaluations funded will be randomized evaluations, studies that use rigorous quasi-experimental methods will be considered by the IPA fund

when a randomized evaluation is not possible. We will also consider requests for supplementary funding for ongoing studies. (Maximum award: \$250,000)

- **Infrastructure and public goods creation:** This includes the creation of [panel datasets](#), other new data, [software](#), measurement strategies, and similar assets. Projects will represent a public good for the research community and/or policy stakeholders, with data or tools that can support several research projects or types of analyses, often ultimately supporting the design or implementation of future impact evaluations. We will particularly welcome proposals that address barriers to research in hard-to-reach or under-researched contexts, or on under-researched topics. (Maximum award: \$250,000)

In DLI's Fifth Round, two additional categories are available for researchers with lived experience of displacement and refugee-led organizations. More information on these funding categories can be found [here](#).

- **Evidence Use Grants:** These grants will be earmarked for RLOs and researchers with lived experience of displacement to translate rigorous research into policy and practice. These grants are intended to support evidence use, policy engagement, or research dissemination activities. This could include support to map evidence to their existing programming, create evidence-informed theories of change, leverage evidence for policy advocacy, and host events to share research findings. (Maximum award: \$20,000)
- **Conference Travel Grants:** These grants would support the participation of researchers with lived experience in major academic and policy conferences. Coverage includes travel, accommodation, registration, and per diem. Priority will be given to applicants and conferences with direct links to DLI's research themes. (Maximum award: \$4,000)

In recognition that research in some locations or with some populations is more costly, on a case-by-case basis we will consider budgets over the above award maximums that provide appropriate justification.

## VI. Achieving Impact

This initiative will be successful if it changes research, policy, and practice on displaced livelihoods. Examples of impactful studies include those that challenge the conventional wisdom on a subject, especially the theoretical priors that academics, policymakers, and practitioners typically bring to the problem; those that inform changes to the studied programs; those that generate evidence on under-researched contexts or topics; and those that identify scalable solutions.

To that end, in addition to publishing an academic journal article and presenting in academic forums, we expect grantees to engage meaningfully with their implementing partners, publish non-technical research summaries and briefs on the IPA and J-PAL websites, participate in broader dissemination events convened by IPA and J-PAL, and engage in dialogues with policymakers or practitioners

supporting or designing similar programs.<sup>4</sup> DLI staff will support grantees with many of these activities.

All supported impact evaluations will be required to collect cost data that can be used for cost-effectiveness analysis, following IPA and J-PAL's costing guidelines and provided templates.<sup>5</sup> Cost-effectiveness analysis can assist policymakers when they are choosing how to allocate resources between different programs, or deciding to replicate or scale up a program that is demonstrated to be effective. Projects demonstrating positive impacts on the outcomes of interest will be required to make cost-effectiveness data publicly available, and all evaluations will be required to make the per unit cost of programs public.

## VII. Funding Criteria

### Evaluation Criteria

Proposals are reviewed by a rotating group of academic researchers and, in some cases, policy reviewers. Projects are assessed against five equally weighted evaluation criteria:

<b>Academic contribution</b>	Does the study make a significant contribution toward advancing knowledge in the field? How does the study compare with the existing body of research? Is the research designed to probe mechanisms (i.e. how an intervention has impact)? Does it answer new questions or introduce novel methods, measures, or interventions? Is there academic relevance? Does the research strategy provide a bridge between a practical experiment and underlying economic theories?
<b>Policy relevance</b>	Does the study address DLI's priority research areas? Is there demand from policymakers or practitioners for more/better information to influence their decisions in this area? Will results from the intervention have generalizable implications? How will the "lessons learned" have relevance beyond this case? What is the estimated cost of the intervention? Does the intervention scale?
<b>Technical design</b>	Does the research design appropriately answer the questions outlined in the proposal? Are there threats that could compromise the validity of results? If so, does the proposal sufficiently address those threats? For full study proposals, are designs powered to detect results?

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<sup>4</sup> More information about expected policy and practice milestones can be found in our Application Instructions, below.

<sup>5</sup> More information about IPA's approach to cost-effectiveness analysis can be found [here](#), and J-PAL's can be found [here](#).

**Project viability**

Is the relationship with the implementing partner strong and likely to endure through the entire study? What is the credibility and policy influence of the implementing partner? Does the implementing partner have committed or prospective sources of funding for the project? What is the implementing partner's prior experience implementing this type of program? Are there any other logistical or political obstacles that might threaten the completion of the study, such as government authorization or Human Subjects review? For pilots, do researchers describe how piloting activities would inform a full-scale impact evaluation? For infrastructure and public goods projects, do researchers describe how the project could contribute to further research and future impact evaluations? Does the research team have a track record of implementing successful projects similar to the one being proposed?

**Value for money**

Is the cost of the study commensurate with the value of expected contributions to science and policy? Does the study leverage funding from other sources?

## Additional Considerations

When reviewing proposals, staff and researchers will also consider:

- **Ethics:** Reviewers will consider whether there is any risk of harm to research participants and staff, what the proposed risk mitigation strategies are, and how the possible benefits of the research compare to the possible harms. Projects are required to have secured all necessary research approvals from all relevant local, national, and international ethics committees prior to beginning fieldwork. Given the particular vulnerability of DLI's target population, we ask applicants to elaborate on the ethical considerations underpinning their work in addition to fulfilling IPA's and J-PAL's regular IRB review requirements. We ask that researchers keep the best interest of the target population in mind throughout all stages of their research activities.
- **Team Diversity and Lived Experience:** DLI welcomes proposals from diverse research teams. We highly encourage proposals from teams with researchers or other research team members (research associates, managers, enumerators, etc.) with lived experiences related to the topic. We also encourage prospective applicants to consider working both across disciplines and with researchers from the countries where the project will take place. In Round V, additional funding will be earmarked for teams that include researchers with lived experience of displacement and/or teams who evaluate the work of refugee-led organizations.

## Researcher Qualifications

DLI accepts proposals from research teams with at least one team member whose primary affiliation is with a university. For further eligibility information, please see our [Application Instructions](#).

Practitioners should partner with academics with track records implementing similar research to

apply for funding. IPA and J-PAL are available to support matchmaking with researchers. Please fill out [this form](#) or contact us for more information.

## VIII. Timeline and Application Process

### Dates for Round V

- **Wednesday, April 15, 2026:** Competitive Round Announced
- **Friday, May 15, 2026:** Mandatory Expression of Interest Deadline
- **Friday, July 24, 2026:** Full Proposal Deadline

### Off-cycle Proposals

While most of the funding will be disbursed through scheduled funding rounds, we understand that some research projects face significant time constraints and need to receive funding before the end of a regular funding round to make use of an unanticipated opportunity (e.g., a newly-announced policy change that will go into effect soon, creating an opportunity for an evaluation). The maximum amount awarded to off-cycle proposals is \$75,000. We encourage researchers in such situations to reach out directly to [displacement@poverty-action.org](mailto:displacement@poverty-action.org).

### Application Instructions

Please find our Application Instructions [here](#).

## X. Contacts

For questions about the funding process or project development, please email [displacement@poverty-action.org](mailto:displacement@poverty-action.org).

## XI. About IPA and J-PAL

**Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA)** is a research and policy nonprofit that creates and shares evidence, while equipping decision-makers to use evidence to reduce poverty. With a long-term presence in 20 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and evaluations in 30+ more countries, IPA leads the field of development in cutting-edge research quality, innovation, and impact. 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 our

founding in 2002, IPA has worked with over 600 leading academics to conduct over 900 evaluations in over 50 countries. This research has informed hundreds of successful programs that now impact millions of individuals worldwide.

<https://poverty-action.org/>

The **Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab** (J-PAL) is a global research center working to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. Anchored by a network of over 290 affiliated professors and over 475 invited researchers at universities around the world, J-PAL conducts randomized impact evaluations to answer critical questions in the fight against poverty. The J-PAL network has launched over 1,640 randomized evaluations across the world and is committed to supporting the application of research insights and the scaling of programs that have been evaluated and found to be effective: more than 600 million people have been reached by programs that were scaled up after being evaluated by J-PAL affiliates.

<https://www.povertyactionlab.org/>

## Annex: Displacement Research Resources

The below resources were identified in consultations with displacement researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, or through IPA and J-PAL's work, as valuable resources for applicants to consider when conducting research on displacement. The list is by no means exhaustive.

### Literature Reviews, Impact Evaluations, and Reports

<a href="#">2022 Global Refugee Work Rights Report</a> (Refugees International, the Center for Global Development, Asylum Access)	This report documents the extent to which refugees and other forced migrants continue to face barriers in achieving equitable economic inclusion around the world.
<a href="#">Cost-Effectiveness of Jobs Projects in Conflict and Forced Displacement Contexts</a> (World Bank Group)	This study provides novel data from six low- and middle-income economies on how much it costs to create and sustain jobs in conflict and forced displacement settings.
<a href="#">Jobs Interventions for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons</a> (Schuettler & Caron, World Bank Group), and the associated <a href="#">Jobs Solutions Note</a>	This literature review brings together two strands of research to inform the design of successful job interventions in this context: the evidence on how forced displacement impacts those forcibly displaced in their economic lives and the existing knowledge on jobs interventions for refugees and IDPs.
<a href="#">Labor Market Access and Outcomes for Refugees</a> (Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement)	This digest discusses the barriers that host governments impose on refugees' labor market access and reviews the academic research on the effects of these policies and practices on refugees and host communities.
<a href="#">Published Rigorous Impact Evaluations on Forced Displacement in LMICs</a> (Innovations for Poverty Action)	This is a list of the published randomized evaluations and RDDs conducted with displaced populations in lower- and middle-income countries. Are we missing one? Please fill out <a href="#">this form</a> .
<a href="#">Social Cohesion and Forced Displacement: A Synthesis of New Research</a> (World Bank Group)	This report synthesizes findings from a joint series of 26 working papers on forced displacement and social cohesion.

### Research Implementation Resources

<a href="#">Guidelines for Co-produced Research with Refugees and Other People with Lived Experience of Displacement</a> (UNSW Sydney, APNOR, and Act for Peace)	These guidelines aim to provide clear principles and strategies for individuals and organizations interested in co-produced research with refugees and other displaced people.
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<p><a href="#">Humanitarian Research Toolkit</a> (International Rescue Committee)</p>	<p>This is a toolkit for conducting research in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, comprising guidance, training documents, and other practical tools.</p>
<p><a href="#">Immigrant Integration Index</a> (Immigration Policy Lab)</p>	<p>This index examines outcome measures on six dimensions of integration: psychological, social, economic, political, linguistic, and navigational.</p>
<p><a href="#">International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics</a> (EGRISS)</p>	<p>These recommendations outline an internationally-agreed framework for countries and international organizations to improve the production, coordination, and dissemination of high-quality official statistics on internally displaced persons that are consistent over time and comparable across regions and countries.</p>
<p>The Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement’s <a href="#">Microdata Library</a> (JDC)</p>	<p>This is a collection of datasets on displaced populations, often including links to the implemented questionnaires.</p>
<p><a href="#">Low-Cost, Automated WhatsApp Surveys</a> (Immigration Policy Lab)</p>	<p>This is a public survey tool for deploying surveys on WhatsApp, which has been used with hard-to-reach and highly mobile populations.</p>
<p><a href="#">Refugee Health Screener</a> (Pathways to Wellness)</p>	<p>The Refugee Health Screener (RHS-15) is a tool for screening refugees for emotional distress and mental health. This document includes the tool, background on its development, and guidelines for using it.</p>
<p><a href="#">Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis</a> (FAO)</p>	<p>This tool estimates household resilience to food insecurity with a quantitative approach to establish a cause-effect relationship between resilience and its critical determinants.</p>
<p><a href="#">Self-Reliance Index</a> (Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative)</p>	<p>This index is a tool for measuring the progress of refugee households toward self-reliance.</p>

## Ethics Resources

<p><a href="#">Data Responsibility in Humanitarian Action</a> (Inter-Agency Standing Committee)</p>	<p>This operational guidance provides concrete steps to ensure that data is safe, ethical, and effectively managed in humanitarian action, laying out a set of principles and actions for data responsibility.</p>
<p><a href="#">Ethical conduct of randomized evaluations</a> (J-PAL)</p>	<p>This resource is intended as a practical guide for researchers to use when considering the ethics of a given research project.</p>

<p><a href="#">Ethics for Humanitarian Innovation Toolkit</a> (ELRHA)</p>	<p>This toolkit is designed to provide organizations, teams, and individuals with practical ethical resources to manage innovation responsibly and successfully.</p>
<p><a href="#">Gender-Based Violence Research Methodologies in Humanitarian Settings</a> (ELRHA)</p>	<p>This document provides an evidence review and recommendations on research methodology and ethics to support researchers conducting research on GBV in humanitarian settings.</p>
<p><a href="#">Humanitarian Learning Agenda</a> (J-PAL)</p>	<p>This learning agenda provides guidance on how randomized impact evaluations can be deployed in humanitarian settings and draws on examples from existing studies to inform avenues for future research.</p>
<p><a href="#">The ethical contours of research in crisis settings: five practical considerations for academic institutional review boards and researchers</a> (International Rescue Committee)</p>	<p>This paper seeks to describe five issues particular to humanitarian settings that IRBs should consider and on which they should provide recommendations to overcome associated challenges: staged reviews of protocols in acute emergencies, flexible reviews of modification requests, addressing violence and the traumatic experiences of participants, difficulties in attaining meaningful informed consent among populations dependent on aid, and ensuring reviews are knowledgeable of populations' needs.</p>



More information about the Displaced Livelihoods Initiative can be found on our websites.

[Initiative Overview](#)



[IPA Call for Proposal Page](#)



[J-PAL Call for Proposals Page](#)

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