IPA's Ambition: Deepening Impact

Executive Summary

Every day, leaders make choices that shape millions of lives. A ministry of education decides how to help children who have fallen behind in reading. A health agency chooses where to direct scarce funds. A funder weighs which program deserves to expand. IPA envisions a world where these choices are routinely informed by evidence. In that world, programs proven to achieve outcomes, like improving child development, increasing farmers' incomes, or keeping girls in school, serve all the people in a country that need them, and data and evidence are built into how institutions operate, year after year.

Conflict, climate shocks, and tighter budgets raise the urgency of using resources well and pose new questions about what works. Governments have the reach and delivery systems to bring effective interventions to scale. Better data and new tools, such as artificial intelligence (AI), are expanding what is possible, while also creating new risks of widening inequities. More than ever, partners need data and evidence that answer their most pressing questions, and the systems and capacity to act on what they learn.

IPA is well-positioned to meet this moment. For more than 20 years, IPA has built broad and deep expertise in conducting rigorous research and moving it to impact, helping shape policies and programs that have reached millions of people. IPA's nuanced understanding of what this work requires is drawn from over 1,000 evaluations in 60-plus countries, more than 20 Embedded Evidence Labs, and over 60 government partnerships.

Looking ahead, IPA's Ambition continues the work already underway. What changes is our intention: we will be laser-focused on scale and strengthening data and evidence use within institutions, with high-quality data and rigorous evidence serving (as always) as the cross-cutting foundation of all that we do.

This Ambition lays out a bold vision for the future:



Evidence-informed approaches reach scale. Proven programs serve people nationally and keep delivering results, with partners leading delivery themselves.



Governments use evidence for the long term. Evidence shapes decisions year after year, and Embedded Evidence Labs become part of government structures and budgets.



Decision-makers have answers to pressing problems. Credible evidence is available from design through scale, and the evidence base grows fastest where need is greatest.



The wider sector uses evidence to create change. Organizations that IPA has never worked with use our tools, such as Best Bets and the Scaling Ingredients Framework, to make their own changes.

To work toward this vision, IPA will:

1. **Strengthen the use of data and evidence within institutions.** Expand IPA's Embedded Evidence Labs so evidence use is built into government roles and budgets, and bring a policy lens to more projects.
2. **Design for scale from day one.** Apply IPA's Scaling Ingredients Framework early, and offer structured support on implementation, costing, and monitoring as programs grow.
3. **Broaden our research toolkit.** Answer broader partner questions; from what works to how, where, at what scale, for whom, and at what cost, using an expanded range of tools including implementation research, cost-effectiveness modeling, policy design, and data science alongside randomized controlled trials.
4. **Put AI to work responsibly.** Use AI to strengthen IPA's research, evaluate AI interventions before they scale, and help partners adopt AI well.

To deliver on these goals, IPA will be selective and thoughtful in what we pursue (and where), focusing on projects, programs, and locations where evidence can most affect how resources are spent. IPA will also invest in areas that will enable this work to come to life, including:

- **Sector depth.** Expertise in health, agriculture, and social protection, where high-return interventions are creating new opportunities for impact.
- **IPA staff.** Stronger team skills in new research methods, AI literacy, and government advisory work, to meet the demands of scaling and institutionalization.
- **Researcher network.** A broader network spanning implementation research, portfolio evaluation, and qualitative methods, with clear quality standards to uphold our rigor.

This Ambition is a guidepost for the years to come and will evolve as the sector does, shaped by what IPA learns and what our partners need. IPA invites governments, researchers, funders, and implementers to join us in achieving our ambitions of building a world with more evidence and less poverty.

Read the full ambition on the IPA website



IPA Peru staff with representatives from the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP), following the presentation of a monitoring and learning strategy developed for the Ministry's Economic Assistance for Orphanhood social protection service. Photo Credit: Mariafé Egúsquiza