



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Building a world with more evidence and less poverty



Front Cover: Yorivel, an enumerator with IPA Panama, walked for 6 hours to reach participants in the indigenous community Ngäbe-Bugle for an IPA study. © 2019 Pilar Ouro Paz

Inside Front Cover: IPA Executive Director Annie Duflo (front row, fourth from the left) visits the IPA Côte d'Ivoire office. © 2022 IPA

Back Cover: A survey conducted during IPA's impact evaluation of land allocation programs in Myanmar. © 2020 IPA Myanmar

A Letter from Annie

In 2021 our staff, partners, board, and network of researchers worked tirelessly to generate evidence on what does and doesn't work to improve the lives of people living in poverty and advance high-impact policy opportunities. As IPA approaches its 20th year, we continue to be inspired by the many ways in which evidence has translated into real programs and policies in countries where we work. We are grateful for many new opportunities to co-create policy-relevant studies and work with stakeholders to put evidence into practice to improve lives in the years to come.

Throughout 2021, IPA continued to respond to the evolving pandemic by generating evidence and pivoting our research methodologies and policy engagements. The [NORM study in Bangladesh](#) showed that wearing masks reduced COVID-19 in a real-world setting and identified the most effective approach to increase mask wearing. This approach was scaled up in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Our [RECOVR Research Hub](#) centralized research and policy lessons. This generated a portfolio of rigorous evidence on people's ability to cope with the pandemic and on programs' abilities to mitigate the impacts of the crisis on livelihoods, health, and education. The year also marked [innovations for remote data collection](#) with multi-mode methodologies responsive to the COVID-19 context. We continued remote data collection through phone surveys and safely returned to in-person research in some contexts.

Early in 2021, we announced [our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion](#). We believe that making research more locally grounded by increasing the engagement of researchers from the countries where we work will lead to more policy-relevant and impactful studies. To deepen our support for policy impact through our local partnerships, we increased our focus on expanding our researcher network in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and developed a multi-pronged strategy. We created more development

and mentorship opportunities for our staff to develop as researchers.

We launched new research agendas and initiatives, such as the [Human Trafficking Research Initiative \(HTRI\)](#) and [interoperable payment systems research on digital financial services](#). We celebrated a decade of impact through our [Entrepreneurship and Private Sector Development \(EPSD\) Program](#).

Across our regions and sectors, we continued to build a culture of evidence use in policymaking and implementation. Our [Embedded Labs](#) supported and equipped decision-makers to utilize data and evidence to make decisions. We advanced promising evidence along the path-to-scale, as illustrated in the scale-up of [a Zambia study](#) that showed improvements in childhood stunting with at-home child growth charts.

This annual report, shorter than previous years, highlights the key accomplishments that we achieved with our partners, funders, donors, staff, study participants, and policymakers.

Here are some highlights from the past year.



RESPONSE TO COVID-19

NORMalizing masks. In Bangladesh, researchers and IPA partnered with Bangladeshi policymakers and a local non-governmental organization (NGO) to design and evaluate various strategies to increase mask-wearing and assess the impact of community mask-wearing on SARS-CoV-2 infection rates. [This study](#) was the first randomized trial to show that wearing masks reduced COVID-19 in a real-world setting, now called the NORM model.

RECOVR. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, IPA launched [Research for Effective COVID-19 Responses \(RECOVR\)](#) in 2020. Throughout 2021, IPA generated rigorous evidence, advised governments, and brought together partners across the research-to-policy sector to rapidly provide decision-makers with rigorous data and evidence to mitigate the impacts of the crisis.

Vaccine acceptance and hesitancy. As COVID-19 vaccination ramped up worldwide, understanding factors that may lead people in LMICs to reject COVID-19 vaccination was of global concern, as lags in vaccination could facilitate the global spread of variants. [Researchers surveyed](#) nearly 45,000 individuals in 10 LMICs, the United States, and Russia between June 2020 and January 2021. They found high levels of vaccine acceptance in LMICs, with an average acceptance

rate of 80 percent among respondents, with self-protection as the primary motivation.

Innovations in data collection methods. In response to COVID-19, IPA expanded how we do sampling, our survey modes, and the sophistication of our face-to-face data collection. We [developed deep expertise and published methodological studies](#) on Random Digit Dial survey methods in low-income countries. We ran WhatsApp surveys, Interactive Voice Response (robocall) surveys, and live phone interviews to reach more and different types of respondents. We also expanded our in-person data collection capabilities and multi-mode methods to mitigate risks of infectious diseases like COVID-19 and Ebola.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

In 2021, we introduced [our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategy](#), a multi-year approach to strengthen DEI in our workforce, with our partnerships, and throughout our work to reduce global poverty with rigorous evidence.

IPA formalized a strategy to **diversify IPA's research network in LMICs** to deepen our support for policy impact through our local partnerships. This strategy builds upon IPA's strengths as a convener, employer, coach, and implementer of research projects. In its first year of implementation, we constituted an advisory board, assessed current needs and efforts, and established 15 partnerships with universities and research institutions. We also provided proposal development support for 30 projects and established an African internship program.

10 YEARS OF THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP & PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (EPSD)

Over the past decade, the [Entrepreneurship and Private Sector Development Program](#) (formerly called the Small and Medium Enterprise program) at IPA has been at the

forefront of the evidence generation efforts to understand what works to support entrepreneurship and small and medium enterprise development in LMICs. With a portfolio of nearly 200 research projects across 39 countries, we have developed a strong network of researchers and partnered with key decision-makers globally to address some of the most important challenges businesses and entrepreneurs face.

LAUNCH OF NEW RESEARCH AGENDAS & INITIATIVES

IPA established the [Human Trafficking Research Initiative](#) (HTRI) which supports the generation of rigorous research on counter-trafficking programs and strategies to inform future interventions. HTRI will generate actionable findings and produce high-quality studies by encouraging cooperation across a multidisciplinary network of researchers. The initiative will conduct formative pilot testing of programs and large-scale studies on efforts to prevent trafficking, prosecute traffickers, and protect trafficked persons.

The Financial Inclusion Program (FIP) announced a [new research agenda on interoperability](#)—the ability to send payments across different networks. Imagine, for example, not being able to use a debit card or mobile app to pay for gas, even though the station accepts digital payments because the owner of the station uses a different bank. Over the next three years, FIP will conduct seven to eight research studies to inform policies that allow people to use their money digitally as easily as they use cash.

EQUIPPING DECISION-MAKERS TO USE EVIDENCE

There is growing interest in our embedded lab model with seven [Embedded Labs](#) around the world, including new labs within the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Ministry of Employment in Côte d'Ivoire, and the Inspector Attorney General Office in Colombia. Embedded Labs in Ghana, Rwanda, Zambia, and Peru are scaling up evidence-based education interventions reaching millions of learners.

We have continued to grow the [Right-Fit Evidence](#) (RFE) advisory unit, which supports funders, NGOs, social businesses, and governments to be smarter producers and users of data and evidence. The unit started more than a dozen new engagements in 2021. Among them, RFE facilitated learning communities within early childhood

development NGOs in East Africa; built monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) capacity of government ministries in West Africa; and advised philanthropic foundations seeking to make their grant partnerships more learning-focused.

PATH-TO-SCALE RESEARCH FOR CHILD GROWTH IN ZAMBIA

Stunting negatively affects the health, development, and future incomes of affected children. Stunting remains a major problem in Zambia, where 35 percent of children under 5 are stunted. We have developed [path-to-scale research agendas](#) in collaboration with key stakeholders around two evidence-based interventions—the distribution of a home-based growth chart poster and the provision of a daily lipid-based nutrient supplement—on child growth outcomes. Findings will have policy-relevant implications for the ambitious targets to reduce childhood stunting outlined in the Government of Zambia's Seventh National Development Plan.

We have demonstrated during a year of resilience that through evidence generation and synthesis, effective partnerships, diverse voices, and collective engagement by IPA's partners and stakeholders, impact is possible even amid global uncertainty. I am incredibly grateful for the support we received this year from donors, stakeholders, our Board of Directors, and our network of researchers across the world.

I am especially proud of our growing team of highly skilled, capable, determined, and enthusiastic professionals working together remotely, from different corners of the world. Moving into 2022, I look forward to continuing our work to drive research agendas to build evidence, advocating for high-impact policy opportunities that make a powerful difference in lives across the globe, and celebrating 20 years of innovations and impact at IPA.



Annie Duflo
Executive Director

Left Image: An IPA enumerator (left) and a company manager review financial data during an IPA study in Colombia. © 2019 Luz Karime Palacios



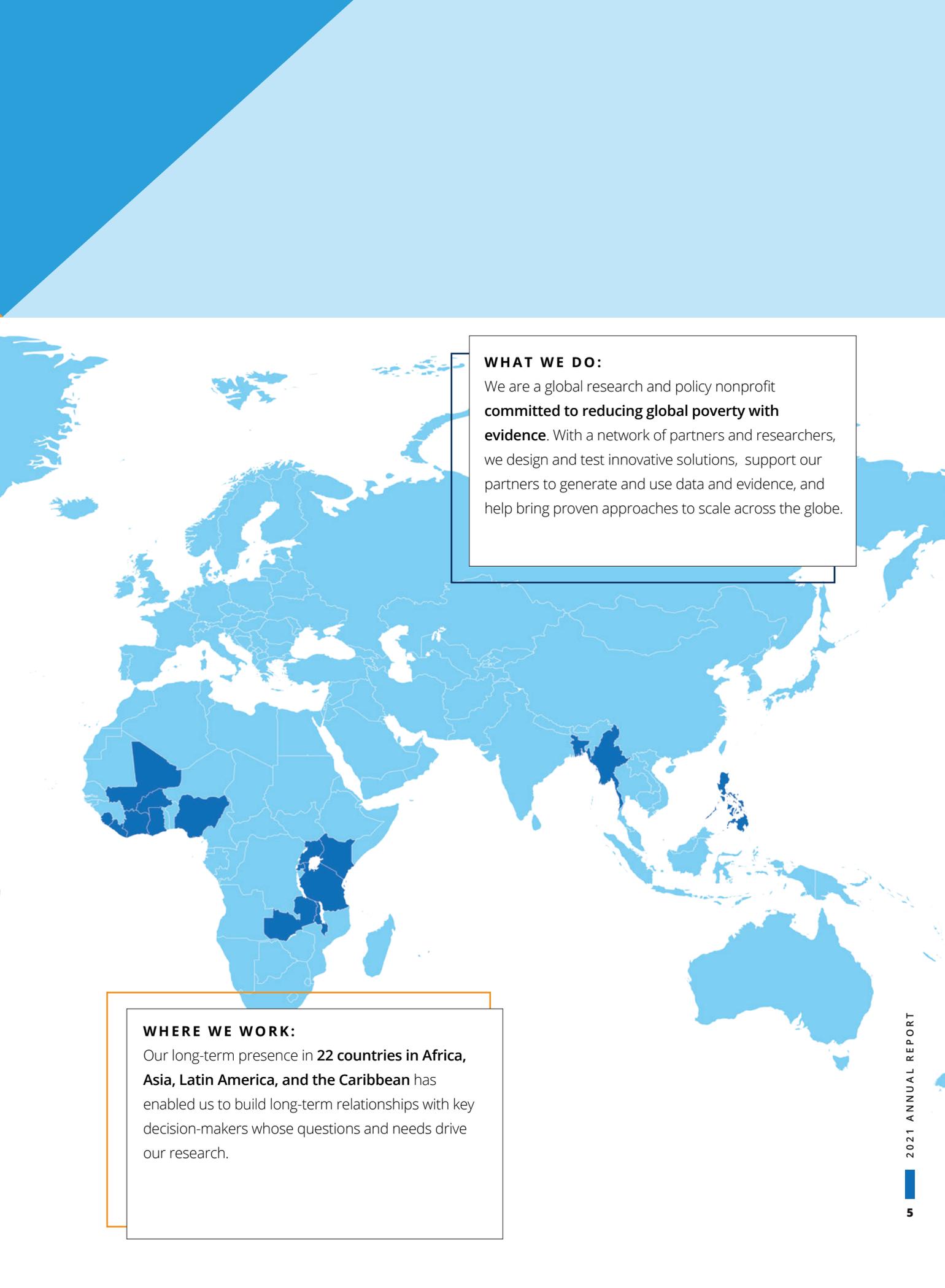
Who We Are

OUR MISSION

We discover and promote effective solutions to global poverty problems.

OUR IMPACT:

Since our founding in 2002, we have impacted hundreds of millions of lives with evidence-based interventions. **We work hand-in-hand with local decision-makers to identify needs, create evidence, and put evidence into action.** We are building a results-focused culture of learning and continuous improvement in the fight against poverty.



WHAT WE DO:

We are a global research and policy nonprofit **committed to reducing global poverty with evidence.** With a network of partners and researchers, we design and test innovative solutions, support our partners to generate and use data and evidence, and help bring proven approaches to scale across the globe.

WHERE WE WORK:

Our long-term presence in **22 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean** has enabled us to build long-term relationships with key decision-makers whose questions and needs drive our research.



Our Values



COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING LIVES

We exist to improve the lives of people living in poverty through evidence and we care deeply about achieving our mission.



RIGOR

We are unrelenting and rigorous in our pursuit of effective solutions.



INTEGRITY

We hold ourselves and our partners to the highest ethical standards in all we do and how we do it.



CO-CREATION

We work with our partners to co-create locally-driven change, always guided by the context of the countries in which we operate.



DIVERSITY

Our diverse ideas, experiences, and identities allow us to make a greater impact locally and globally.



COLLABORATION

We build strong relationships with researchers, partners, and each other to achieve greater impact.

Left Image: IPA Kenya staff participate in a team-building exercise. © 2022 IPA Kenya

Top Image: A policymaking workshop co-organized by IPA and the Rwanda Development Board. © 2021 IPA

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We are grateful to all members of the global IPA community who support our mission to discover and promote effective solutions to global poverty problems. In addition to grassroots-level support of individuals around the world, our work in 2021 was made possible by grants and contributions from the following funders and donors.

FUNDERS

The foundations, governments, corporations, multilateral organizations, and NGOs supporting IPA's research and programs

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ActionAid Myanmar
African Management Institute
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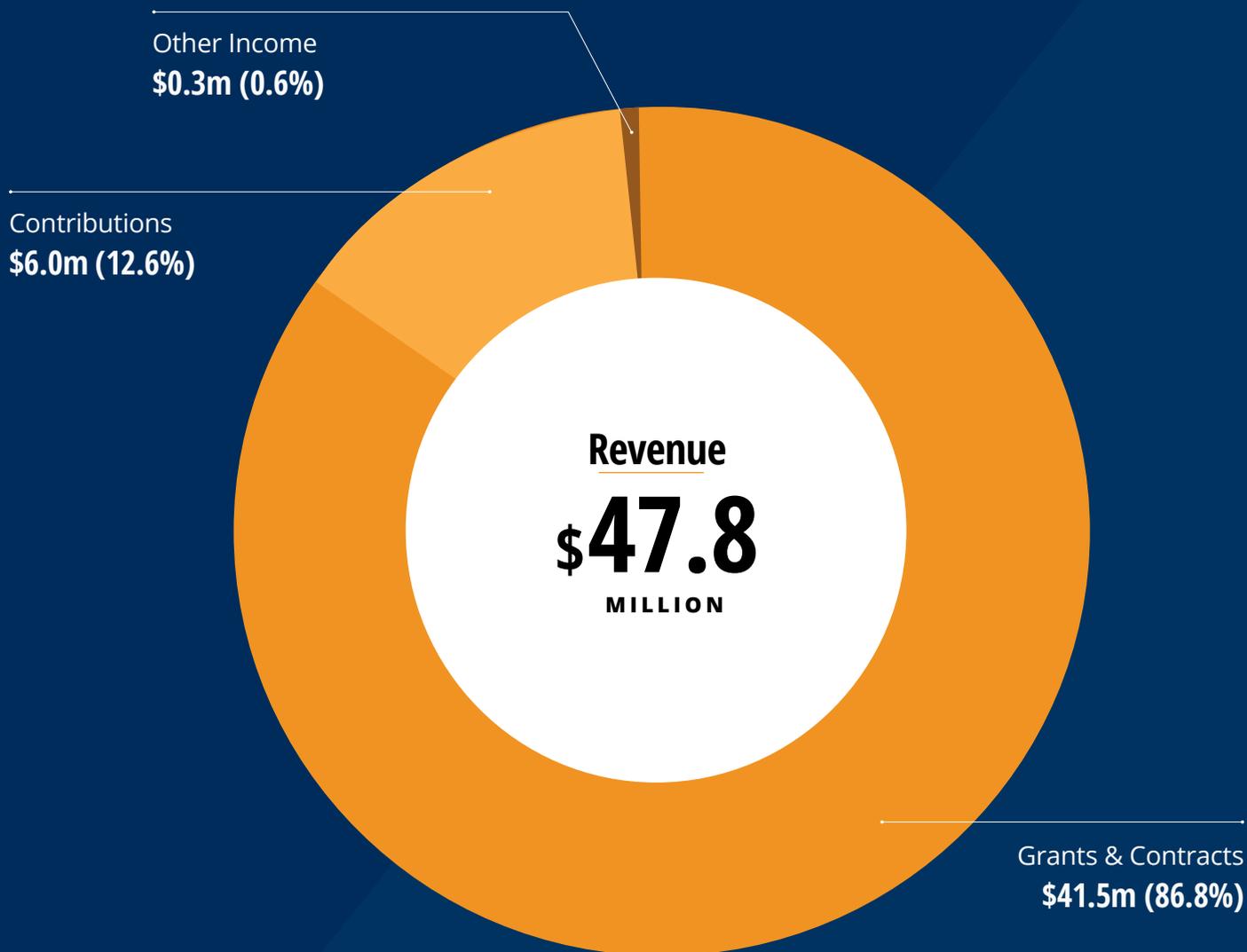
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**In 2021, we received 35 gifts from donors who wished to remain anonymous*

2021 Financial Report



NET ASSETS

End of 2020 / **\$2.53m**

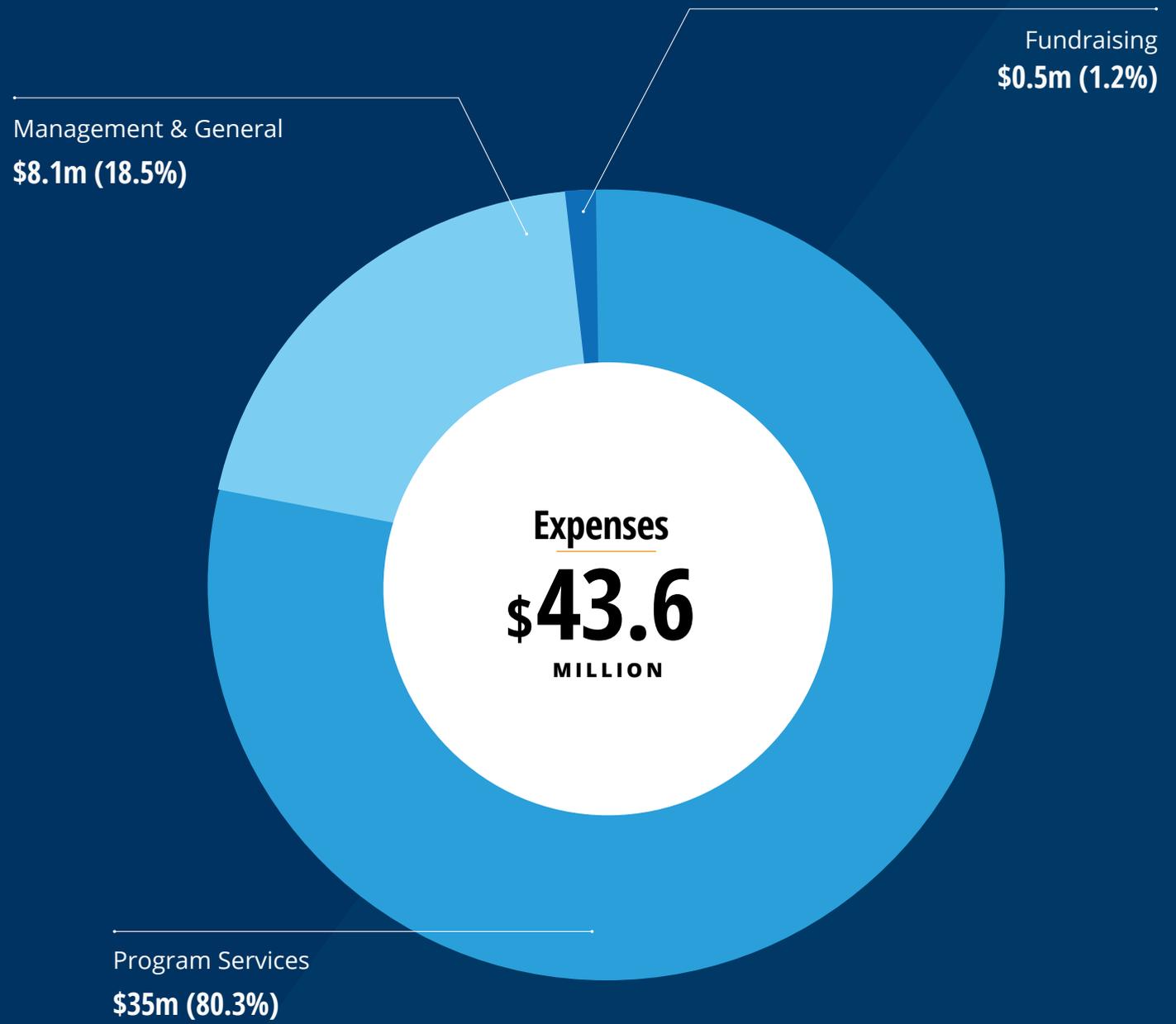
End of 2021 / **\$6.63m**

Change in Net Assets / **\$4.1m**

IPA's 2021 fiscal year covered January 1 to December 31, 2021. Percentages are calculated using exact amounts rather than rounded amounts. See our audited financials at: poverty-action.org/financials



IPA is recognized as a platinum-level GuideStar participant, demonstrating our commitment to transparency. We are also a BBB Accredited Charity and one of The Life You Can Save's top recommended charities for effective giving.



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