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Innovations for Poverty Action asks the tough questions

IPA's New Haven-based Data Coordinator, Matt White, was featured in a video interview with the New Haven Register where he discusses his experience working with IPA's Urban Micro-Insurance Project in Kenya.

Excerpt:

Jua Kali is both a place and a type of freelance worker in Nairobi, Kenya, where White devoted a year of his life. It's where hundreds of poor metalworkers are helping White find out if new economics can solve some age-old problems.

“People are living in destitute poverty. You're stepping over streams of sewage, and kids are just running around,” says White, data coordinator for Innovations for Poverty Action, a New Haven-based nonprofit. “Jua Kali is where they work. Always in the background there, you can hear the sound of hammers.”

White spent parts of 2010 and 2011 in Kenya to test one of the hottest topics in global economics: micro health insurance. This is the idea of providing very cheap health insurance to poor workers who have little or no access to basic health care.

“Micro health insurance has become increasingly popular,” White, 23, explains. “Money is being spent on it. But does it work? Is it worth investing in?”

That's where White's group enters.

Innovations for Poverty Action steps in, develops a randomized control study of the situation, conducts the study and determines whether or not an anti-poverty program is having the desired effect. The subjects range from school attendance and agriculture to clean water and mosquito nets.

IPA has completed more than 80 such studies since 2002 and has more than 300 ongoing projects in dozens of countries, including the U.S.

“There are things you can't know by just guessing,” White says. “You

can either just go along thinking that something that seems like a good idea is a good idea, or you can do a scientific evaluation.â€

Read the entire article and watch the video [here](#).

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