IPA Establishes Human Trafficking Research Initiative with $5.61 Million Award from U.S. State Department

The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the U.S. State Department announced on Friday that IPA is among the awardees of the new 2020 Program to End Modern Slavery (PEMS). The program will strengthen global anti-trafficking efforts to measure and reduce the prevalence of modern slavery and assess the effectiveness of interventions

The $5.61 million award to IPA will support rigorous research and expand the limited evidence base on what programs work to prevent and prosecute human trafficking and to protect victims around the world. While there have been numerous high-quality studies to understand the complex dynamics of trafficking in persons there have been few projects assessed through randomized evaluations. IPA will bring our unique depth of experience in conducting randomized evaluations of social science interventions around the world to test strategies to address trafficking. This initiative will be ambitious in scope and strive to generate actionable findings and produce some of the highest-quality studies to date by working with a multidisciplinary network of leading researchers from public health, law, psychology, political science, and economics.

With academic leadership from scientific advisors Guy Grossman (University of Pennsylvania) and Cecilia Hyunjung Mo (University of California, Berkeley), the initiative will work to foster partnerships between researchers and practitioners; innovate on and improve the research methods for studying this challenging topic; initiate formative pilot testing of programs; and conduct large-scale studies on the efforts to prevent trafficking, prosecute crimes, and protect trafficked persons.

In order to expand the evidence on Human Trafficking, IPA will commission new research that advances the understanding of what works to reduce trafficking and influence current policy and practice. The Human Trafficking Research Fund will be the central focus of the initiative. The priority themes and guiding questions will be developed through the consultative process with leading policymakers, practitioners, and researchers during the first year of the initiative. We currently anticipate releasing our first funding window in the late fall of 2021.

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