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Notes from the field: Surveying in Northern Ghana

IPA Project Associate Elizabeth Schultz is blogging her experiences in helping roll out a new IPA survey in Ghana.

Here is an excerpt:

> We tried to model our question after surveys that had been done in other developing economies, as detailed in Delevande, Gine and McKenzie. These surveys asked respondents to allocate piles of stones to different pots, depending on how likely they thought different amounts of rainfall were. The advantage of this is that the respondent does not even need to be able to count, he or she can just compare quantities, and see that one is larger ... We adapted our questions to ask respondents the probability they would get sick over the next month.
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> What sounded like a simple and elegant model turned out to be an incredible struggle
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> People don't like stones. Natural objects, like stones or beans, are associated with witches' fortune-telling, which people don't like. And here we were asking them to predict future sickness with stones. We switched to bottle caps, which as a man-made object, are less threatening. My friends in Tamale drank beer very diligently and enthusiastically in the weeks leading up to my survey in order to provide the 720 bottle tops I needed.

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