IPA J-PAL UNZA IMPACT EVALUATION COURSE REVIEW

October 2015

Innovations for Poverty Action Zambia (IPA) partnered with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab for Africa (J-PAL) and the University of Zambia (UNZA) to hold a four day impact evaluation course from 24-27 August 2015. The course included two streams: a policymaker stream and a researcher stream. The researcher stream focused on the benefits and methods of randomisation, choosing an appropriate sample size, and common threats and pitfalls to the validity of experiments. The policymaker stream had the same core components but also focused on how to identify good evidence and use this evidence in policy making decisions.

The course took place at the UNZA VET School. The lectures were delivered by J-PAL and IPA affiliate Nava Ashraf (Harvard Business School) as well as Abraham Holland (Harvard Kennedy School), Rachna Nag Chowdhuri (IPA), Erika Keaveney (IPA), Emily Cupito (J-PAL) and Ashleigh Morrell (J-PAL). The participant group work was supported by IPA and J-PAL staff.

This review briefly analyses the feedback received from course assessments and comments with the goal of identifying the strengths of the course, as well as the areas of the course which could be improved in future trainings.
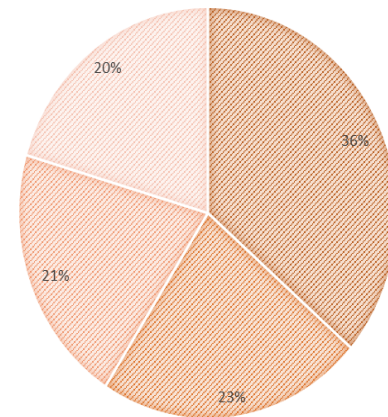

Participant Photo 26 August 2015

Participation

The course was well attended by representatives from government (Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Community Development Mother and Child Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and Cabinet Office), UNZA academics, non-government organisations and international development orgnaisations. Participant attendance was high and consistent throughout the course.

PARTICIPANTS BY ORGANISATION TYPE

■ Government   ■ Research   □ Local NGO   ■ International Orgnaisation

General Feedback

Course surveys indicate that participants were more than satisfied with the course. Eighty percent of participants described quality of instruction as very good or excellent, 95 percent of participants described the course as appropriately challenging; 95 percent described the support provided on the course as good, very good or excellent; and of those who were charged for the course, 100 percent found the course appropriately priced.

General course comments were positive. Participants particularly commented on the clickers (a technology with allows participants to answer questions during a lecture and their answers are displayed on the screen) as being an innovative and

successful way of keeping them engaged. Some participants suggested that the course be extended to five days so that they could have more time to engage with the more challenging concepts.
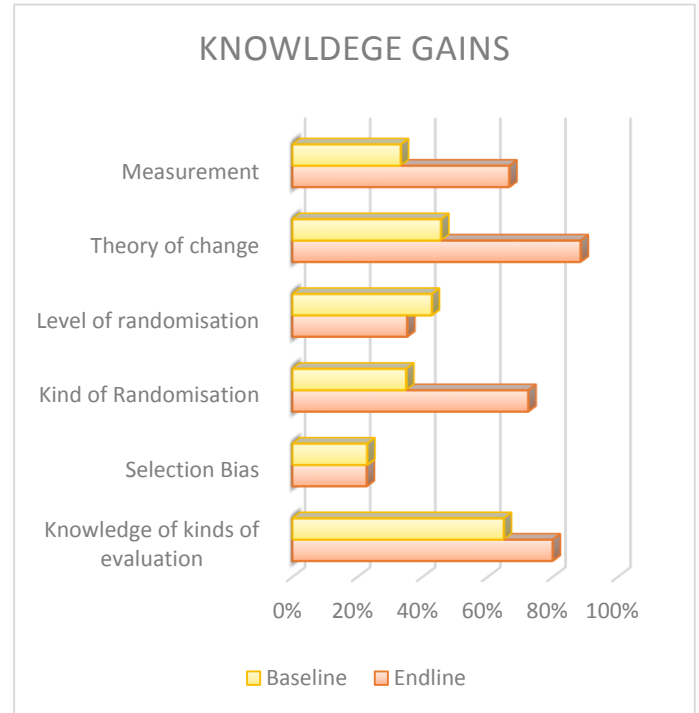
"Very interactive course! Facilitators were very knowledgeable about the course. The use of case studies during tutorials was very helpful in making the students understand the points not clear during lectures. The use of real life examples for the case studies made the course very practical. The inclusion of the group assignments/presentations helped the students with hands on experience." – Course Participant

Knowledge Gains

Participants completed an assessment prior to the course and after the course. The pre-course assessment was administered online and unfortunately not completed by all participants. The post-course assessment was completed by the participants who attended the last day of the course, which was not the full sample. This means that the pre and post comparison does not provide an entirely accurate representation of the knowledge gained by participants during the course. However, it still provides some useful insights.

The graph below shows how participants performed on average in the different sections of the assessment that were comparable across pre and post assessment. The graph shows that in general participants performed better in the post assessment, indicating that the course effectively transferred knowledge about the critical components of randomised evaluation. Furthermore, it appears that the course was most effective at explaining the theory of change, measurement and the different kinds of randomisation.

The course assessment and feedback indicates that the course was successful in keeping participants

KNOWLDEGE GAINS

engaged during course, and in transferring useful information about randomised evaluations.