

# Education

*Helping kids get in school and learn while there*



PHOTO: WILL BOASE

## Low school attendance, absent or overwhelmed teachers, and underperforming schools are on-going impediments to educational attainment for the poor around the world.

While many more children are in school than a decade ago, there are still 58 million children out of school, and even when these kids are in school and complete a few years of education, they are often still unable to read, write, and do basic math. The Education Program Area at Innovations for Poverty Action rigorously evaluates programs that aim to improve education outcomes and school attendance.

In partnership with academic leaders in the field, our work has produced evidence on how to keep kids in school, such as through school-based deworming or sharing information on the benefits of schooling, and on how to make sure kids learn while there, such as in our teacher community assistant initiative in Ghana and through incentives, such as merit scholarships for students.

### Education Policy Lessons

1. Reducing the actual and hidden costs of school helps more kids attend.
2. Targeting instruction at the child's level improves learning levels.

### Policy Impact: Teaching at the Level of the Child

*The Ghana Ministry of Education is partnering with IPA on the Teacher Community Assistant Initiative (TCAI), an education program that assigns teaching assistants to work in small groups with struggling students. TCAI is based on a similar program developed in India that improves school performance. The results from Ghana reaffirm that targeted instruction is an effective approach to improve literacy and numeracy skills, yet there are still implementation questions about how the program can be more effective and cost effective at a nationwide scale. IPA is working together with the Ministry of Education to design and evaluate implementation solutions as the program is scaled.*

*Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/evaluating-teacher-community-assistant-initiative-ghana](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/evaluating-teacher-community-assistant-initiative-ghana)*

# Key Findings

IPA has worked to create evidence from more than 50 education studies. Explore a few of our key findings below and explore all of our education results at [www.poverty-action.org/education](http://www.poverty-action.org/education)

## Distributing free school uniforms increases school attendance in Kenya

Researchers found that giving free uniforms to children in Kenya reduced school days missed for all children by 43 percent, and even more for children who did not have a uniform before the program began. *Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/impact-distributing-school-uniforms-childrens-education-kenya](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/impact-distributing-school-uniforms-childrens-education-kenya)*

## Teacher incentives can improve students' test scores

Linking teachers' pay to students' test performance in Kenya increased student test scores, but improvements dropped off after the program was completed, implying there was little impact of the test preparations onto actual learning. *Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/teacher-incentives-based-students-test-scores-kenya](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/teacher-incentives-based-students-test-scores-kenya)*

## Scholarships can improve secondary school outcomes in Ghana

In this ongoing study in Ghana, researchers are evaluating the effect of secondary school scholarships on educational attainment and cognitive skills in the short run, and on life outcomes in the longer run, from employment and health outcomes to civic participation and attitudes. Results thus far show that cost was a key barrier to secondary school enrollment among middle school graduates, and full scholarships increased young people's educational attainment,



knowledge, and skills. For girls, secondary schooling also produced economic gains, as well as delays in marriage and pregnancy. *Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/returns-secondary-schooling-ghana](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/returns-secondary-schooling-ghana)*

## Accelerated learning can help out of school children catch up

An accelerated learning program for out-of-school children in southern Mali, "Speed Schools" impacted students' educational achievement, home life, and continuation with schooling. The evaluation results suggest that the program is an effective way for out-of-school children to catch up with their in-school peers and be integrated back into the school system. *Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/speed-school-out-school-children-mali](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/speed-school-out-school-children-mali)*

## School-based deworming can improve school attendance

Researchers evaluated a mass school-based deworming program in Western Kenya and found that the program reduced school absenteeism in treatment schools by one-quarter, and was far cheaper than alternative ways of boosting school participation. Deworming also substantially improved health and school participation among untreated children in both treatment schools and neighboring schools. *Read more » [www.poverty-action.org/study/primary-school-deworming-kenya](http://www.poverty-action.org/study/primary-school-deworming-kenya)*

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Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is a research and policy non-profit that discovers and promotes effective solutions to global poverty problems. IPA designs, rigorously evaluates, and refines these solutions and their applications together with researchers and local decision-makers, ensuring that evidence is used to improve the lives of the world's poor. Our well-established partnerships in the countries where we work, and a strong understanding of local contexts, enable us to conduct high-quality research. This research has informed hundreds of successful programs that now impact millions of individuals worldwide.

