

IPA Zambia Co-Hosts Event on the Impact of Teaching Girls Negotiation Skills

On March 16, 2017, Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) and the International Growth Centre (IGC), in collaboration with the Zambian Ministry of General Education (MoGE), hosted a policy dissemination event on research results from the study, “The Impact of Teaching Girls Negotiation Skills in Zambia,” conducted by Prof. Nava Ashraf from the London School of Economics, Natalie Bau from the University of Toronto, Corinne Low from the Wharton School, and Kathleen McGinn from Harvard Business School. The event was attended by 80 stakeholders including representatives from the Ministry of General Education, administrators from treatment schools, negotiation coaches, and members of civil society.

From 2012-2016, the IPA research team led by Prof. Ashraf created and evaluated the impact of a curriculum that taught girls the interpersonal skills needed to negotiate health and educational decisions with authority figures in their lives.

At the event, Prof. Ashraf reported that the negotiation training significantly improved educational outcomes for the average girl. She said this average effect encompasses important differences: girls who were likely on the margin of continuing in school experienced larger educational gains and were also less likely to become pregnant.

The Ministry’s Chief Planning Officer remarked that traditional customs in Zambia have not been conducive to the empowerment of children, particularly girls. There has been no improvement in secondary school dropout rates for either boys or girls, who still lag behind their male counterparts in enrollment rates. The Director of Information and Planning further remarked that the Ministry is committed to evidence-based policy, which is important for development. From the findings of the study, part of the negotiation skills curriculum has been integrated into the curriculum on life skills and sexual health.

The audience then engaged in a vibrant discussion with the panel, highlighting the need for further research on the impact of negotiation training on girls’ post-secondary education and employment outcomes. The Chief Planning Officer stated that the delivery of the negotiation curriculum will be key to its effectiveness and that, given the results, the Ministry needs to take the lead to improve training for teachers in the delivery of its life skills and sexual health curriculum.

Researchers: Nava Ashraf (London School of Economics), Natalie Bau (University of Toronto), Corinne Low (Wharton Business School), and Kathleen McGinn (Harvard Business School)

Partners: Ministry of Education, International Growth Centre (IGC), Anti-AIDS Teachers Association of Zambia (AATAZ), Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA)



Prof. Ashraf presenting at the Girls Negotiation dissemination event.

IPA Zambia Co-Hosts Event on Challenges of Water Provision in Zambia

On March 15, 2017, IPA Zambia co-hosted a policy event with the International Growth Centre (IGC) to disseminate evidence on challenges of water provision in Zambia. The event was attended by 45 stakeholders including representatives from the Ministry of Mines, Energy, and Water Development; Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA); Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company; and NGOs such as GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), and NGO WASH Forum, amongst other organizations.

Professor Nava Ashraf of the London School of Economics presented findings from two studies. The first study, “Infrastructure, Incentives and Institutions,” explored the roles that infrastructure, incentives and institutions play on water and sanitation management in Lusaka district. Results suggest that the optimal policy response to the last mile problem in Lusaka may require a mix of subsidies and penalties. Further institutional capacity needs to be improved and water

infrastructure is vital to the growth and vitality of cities. In the second study, "Water, Health and Wealth," the main aim of the study was to determine whether water supply shortages had an impact on economic activity and health outcomes of the city. The evidence from the study suggested that increased water supply shortages decreased economic activities and increased the incidence of water-related diseases. This was followed by commentary and a brief Q&A with the audience.

Researchers: Nava Ashraf (London School of Economics), Edward Glaeser (Harvard University), Bryce Steinberg (Brown University), Abraham Holland (Harvard University), and Giacomo A.M. Ponzetto (Centre de Recerca en Economia Internacional)

Partners: International Growth Centre (IGC)

Maternal Mortality Risk and the Gender Gap in Desired Fertility

Maternal mortality remains very high in many parts of the developing world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. While people are aware of maternal deaths, they may not be aware of risk factors. An initial survey on men and women's perceptions of maternal risk in Zambia found that superstitions about the causes of maternal mortality are pervasive and that such beliefs may be impeding learning about maternal health risks. People who held traditional beliefs disregarded past birth complications completely in assessing future risk, unlike those who held modern beliefs. Since these misconceptions likely impede efforts to reduce maternal health risk, reproductive health policies that increase information on health-related risk factors may be effective.

From 2016 to mid-2017, an IPA research team will track many important short- and medium- term outcomes to measure the impact of providing this targeted information to different members of the household. If results are positive, the intervention could be scaled throughout Zambia. This scale up would be the culmination of eight years of collaborative partnership with the Ministry of Health, as they seek ways to increase family planning support and use.

Researchers: Nava Ashraf (London School of Economics), Erica Field (Duke University), Alessandra Voena (University of Chicago), Roberta Ziparo (Aix-Marseille University)

Partners: Ministry of Health (MoH), International Growth Centre (IGC)

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About

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) discovers and promotes effective solutions to global poverty problems. We design, rigorously evaluate, and refine these solutions and their applications together with decision-makers to ensure that the evidence created is used to improve opportunities for the world's poor.

The Zambia Bulletin is designed to keep stakeholders and partners informed of ongoing research. For more information, visit www.poverty-action.org/zambia.

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