

# Francophone West Africa



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. Since our founding in 2002, IPA has worked with more than 400 leading academics to manage over 600 evaluations in 51 countries. Our development in the region is mainly in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire, where we have local and international staff, established relationships with government, NGOs, and the private sector, and deep knowledge of local issues.

## More Evidence

In Burkina Faso, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire, we have continued our global tradition of rigorous, applicable research by building foundational research capacity and conducting evaluations in areas of pressing national concern. Examples of our research below offer promising insights into everyday issues that affect the lives of the West African poor.

### SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

Youth unemployment is an acute problem in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2010, Côte d'Ivoire experienced a post-election crisis, which negatively impacted the economy and young people's job opportunities. Researchers are working with the government of Côte d'Ivoire to evaluate the impact of a public apprenticeship program on access to apprenticeships, youth employment, and skills. The apprenticeship program targets 5,000 low-skilled youths aged 18 to 24 years old in the main urban areas of the country. The results of this research will inform the design of the national apprenticeship system, and future investment in apprenticeships in Côte d'Ivoire and beyond.

### SANITATION

In Ouagadougou, only about 50 percent of households use improved sanitation services. Municipalities need better information on the underlying values of the services in order to develop the optimal price structure. This project will help to collect that information and develop pricing structures better adapted at generating increased take-up of the improved sanitation services.

### HEALTH

Family planning and sexuality can be taboo subjects, especially within rural communities. Therefore, women can be reluctant to seek advice at a health facility. In Burkina Faso, we are evaluating the impact of a massive information campaign, broadcast over radio, on knowledge and family planning decisions, including use of contraception and age of the mother at first birth.

## FRANCOPHONE W. AFRICA

Est. 2008

### FOCUS SECTORS

Agriculture, Education, Financial Inclusion, Governance, Health, Small and Medium Enterprises, Social Protection, WASH

### RESEARCH PROJECTS

8 completed, 19 ongoing

### KEY PARTNERS

Agrodia, Banque Mondiale, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Brown University, CISV, COPSA-C, Development Media International, Hewlett Foundation, IFPRI, INERA, Jacobs Foundation, Mali Health Organization Project, Michigan State University, PlaNet Guarantee, Soro Yiriwasso, Strømme Foundation

### KEY RESEARCHERS

Lori Beaman (Northwestern University), Andrew Dillon (Michigan State University), Damien de Walque (World Bank), Clara Delavallade (IFPRI), Pascaline Dupas (Stanford University), Rachel Glennerster (J-PAL), Nathanael Goldberg (IPA), Andrew Jones (University of Michigan), Dean Karlan (Yale University), Harounan Kazianga (Oklahoma State University), Malte Lierl (Yale University), Molly Lipscomb (University of Virginia), Anja Sautmann (Brown University)

### GOVERNANCE

In Burkina Faso and within the municipal elections context, we are evaluating whether first-hand experience with municipal councils and providing local development key indicators to citizens have an impact on performance-based voting and political engagement.

## Better Programs & Policies

IPA's evidence has already contributed to improving millions of lives. Now, with fifteen years of evidence to build on, our programs are increasingly focusing on government and partner collaboration to translate evidence into better programs and policies.

### NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND REFORMS COMMISSION

In Burkina Faso, a National Reconciliation and Reforms Commission was created after the popular uprising of 2014; its goal was "to establish the basis of a truly democratic, fair, free, and inclusive society in Burkina Faso." A consultative process began and citizens, experts, and organizations voiced their complaints and propositions to the commission. IPA Burkina Faso took part in this consultation and made two propositions based on successful programs evaluated by IPA and its sister organization J-PAL, deworming and teaching at the level of the child. Both these recommendations appear in the commission's final report.

### EDUCATION

In Mali, we are working with the Strømme Foundation on the Speed School program, which allows for out-of-school children to attend an accelerated learning course in order to reintegrate into the government school system. The evaluation showed that the program increased enrollment and improved educational outcomes. The Strømme Foundation and IPA are now working on a follow-up evaluation which aims to answer questions on the long-term benefits of the program, any indirect impacts on public schools, and on the possibility to scale up the program to other countries where the Strømme Foundation works.

### THEMATIC CONFERENCES

In Burkina Faso, IPA has organized two conferences aimed at disseminating results and improving the use of evidence in policymaking. In 2014, the event was focused on education, and in 2016 on financial inclusion and agriculture. These events were also an opportunity to organize trainings on impact evaluations and experimental studies.



## Our Future

IPA Francophone West Africa is at an inflection point in its growth. We are transitioning from our early status as a young nonprofit working in the development space into a go-to resource for evidence-based insights for government, nonprofits, and the private sector. As we navigate this transition, we are focusing on two goals. They are to:

- » **Reinforce IPA's status as a known source of high-quality research.** As one of the only organizations in Francophone West Africa with the skills and capacity to conduct high-quality impact evaluations, we are in a strong position to merge our deep knowledge of local issues with our unparalleled research capability.
- » **Partner with decision-makers to seek, generate, and apply evidence at scale to help the poor.** Our IPA research affiliates and our local staff are a rich source of deep expertise and established relationships with local development organizations, academic institutions, and government agencies. We are working to expand those relationships by building policy considerations into all study designs, communicating what we know, and collaborating with partners in government and the private sector to apply it.

Building a world with **More Evidence** and **Less Poverty**.

Contact [info-burkinafaso@poverty-action.org](mailto:info-burkinafaso@poverty-action.org) Visit [www.poverty-action.org/fwa](http://www.poverty-action.org/fwa)