

INNOVATIONS FOR POVERTY ACTION | COUNTRY PROGRAM BRIEF

## Sierra Leone



In recent decades, trillions of dollars have been spent on programs designed to reduce global poverty, but clear evidence on which programs succeed is rare, and when evidence does exist, decision-makers often do not know about it. Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) is a research and policy nonprofit that discovers and promotes effective solutions to global poverty problems. IPA brings together researchers and decision-makers to design, rigorously evaluate, and refine these solutions and their applications, ensuring that the evidence created is used to improve the lives of the world's poor. Since our founding in 2002, IPA has worked with over 600 leading academics to conduct over 830 evaluations in 51 countries. This research has informed hundreds of successful programs that now impact millions of individuals worldwide. In addition to designing and conducting rigorous evaluations, we have a variety of other partnership models, from consulting with organizations on their monitoring and evaluation work through our Right-Fit Evidence Initiative, to supporting governments with evidence generation and use through embedded labs.

### IPA SIERRA LEONE

Since 2008

#### FOCUS SECTORS

Agriculture, Financial Inclusion,  
Gender, Governance, Health,  
Peace & Recovery, Social Protection

#### RESEARCH STUDIES

20 Completed, 7 in Progress

#### KEY PARTNERS

Bank of Sierra Leone, BRAC, International  
Growth Centre (IGC), Ministry of Health and  
Sanitation, UNICEF, UNICEF World Bank

#### KEY RESEARCHERS

Thomas Branson (Johns Hopkins),  
Katherine Casey (Stanford University),  
Dorinda Duke (University of Chicago),  
Rachel Glenister (IFPRI), Anne Karim  
(University of Oxford), Peter Kibuka (IFPRI),  
Bernard (ICRAF), Tawana Sun (IFPRI)

### More Evidence

In Sierra Leone, we have continued our global tradition of rigorous, applicable research by building foundational research capacity and generating evidence to reduce poverty and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Examples of our key research findings are below:

#### A truth and reconciliation program increased forgiveness, but worsened mental health.

A community-based reconciliation program increased forgiveness toward perpetrators of crimes and significantly increased trust in ex-combatants, but it also worsened psychological well-being—increasing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety.

#### Exposure to political debates bolstered voters' knowledge and changed voting behavior.

Watching screenings of political debates increased political knowledge that changed the way people voted. This intervention reduced a campaign expenditure response by candidates, and fostered accountability pressure over the spending patterns of elected officials.

#### Simple bracelets increased immunization rates in Sierra Leone, at a cost of just \$1 per child.

A subtle form of social signaling—bracelets—increased timely and complete vaccination by 14 percentage points at a cost of US\$1 per child, with impacts persisting 12 months after the program rollout. The most effective

bracelet was color-coded to show if a child had completed all five vaccines on time.



### Sierra Leone Country Brief

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