Child Growth and Development Path-to-Scale Research Agenda

September 2020

Path-to-Scale Research at IPA

Innovations for Poverty Action's Path-to-Scale Research (PSR) Program works to accelerate the process of moving evidence-based interventions from proof-of-concept to scalable and adaptable programs and policies. In contrast to *innovation research* that explores brand new ideas for solving development problems, *path-to-scale research* begins with evidence-based approaches that have already shown promise in rigorous impact evaluations. Path-to-scale research builds on these promising approaches by creating evidence on when, where, and why an approach is expected to work, and identifying ways to optimize program design and implementation at scale. Path-to-scale research supports policy-maker efforts to identify and incorporate the most effective interventions into programs and policies, resulting in better health outcomes, improved livelihoods, and less poverty.

Child Growth and Development (Stunting) Initiative

Stunting,[1] or being too short for one's age, is a warning signal that a child is at risk of failing to reach their full potential. Stunting predicts poor school achievement and progress, lower cognition, reduced earnings, and a higher probability of living in poverty. It also increases the risk of death from infectious diseases in childhood. Stunting is a standard measure of chronic malnutrition, but poor nutrition and feeding, inadequate care, and repeated infections can also cause growth faltering. Increases in poverty, disruptions to food and agricultural systems, and reduced access to health services, challenges predating but also exacerbated by the current COVID-19 pandemic, create conditions that make children vulnerable to stunting.[2,3]

In December 2019, the PSR team reviewed evidence on stunting reduction interventions and held a workshop with academic and practitioner experts to identify promising evidence-based approaches (EBAs) and explore research questions to address evidence gaps. These prioritized EBAs include **small-quantity lipid-based nutrient supplements (SQ-LNS)** and **animal source foods** to complement infant diets, **cash transfers with behavior change communication (BCC)** programs, and **home-based growth monitoring**.

The PSR team has consolidated research agendas around four prioritized evidence-based interventions, working closely with stakeholders throughout the process, and is currently seeking implementation and research partnerships for SQ-LNS, cash transfers combined with BCC, and animal-source foods. The PSR team is targeting its research to countries and

1

Child Growth and Development Path-to-Scale Research Agenda

Innovations for Poverty Action's Path-to-Scale Research (PSR) Program works to accelerate the process of moving evidence-based interventions from proof-of-concept to scalable and adaptable programs and policies. In contrast to innovation research that explores brand-new ideas for solving development problems, path-to-scale research begins with evidencebased approaches that have already shown promise in rigorous impact evaluations. Path-to-scale research builds on these promising approaches by creating evidence on when, where, and why an approach is expected to work, and identifying ways to optimize program design and implementation at scale. Path-to-scale research supports policymaker efforts to identify and incorporate the most effective interventions into programs and policies, resulting in better health outcomes, improved livelihoods, and less poverty.

This document covers the research agenda of the PSR Program's Child Development and Growth (Stunting) Initiative. Learn more here.

Innovations for Poverty Action

September 01, 2020