

Date
May 17, 2023

Displaced Livelihoods Initiative | Information Session for Researchers

On May 17, 2023, IPA and J-PAL held a webinar for researchers and research team members who plan to submit a proposal to DLI's inaugural Call for Proposals. The webinar provided an overview of DLI's thematic scope, the type of projects eligible for funding, evaluation criteria, common proposal pitfalls and tips to avoid these, as well as an interactive Q&A session.

You can view the slides from the webinar here, and the recording (in English, with a written transcript available in English, Arabic, French, and Spanish) below.

Displaced Livelihoods Initiative | Information Session for Researchers | May 2023:
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Nessa Kenny:

Great. Hello, everyone, and welcome. My name is Nessa Kenny and I work with Innovations for Poverty Action. And it's my pleasure to welcome you here today to this Information session for researchers about the Displaced Livelihoods Initiative, which is a research research initiative managed jointly by IPA and J-PAL with funding from the IKEA Foundation. So to start, we have a bit of housekeeping for our session today, so we'll start with a short presentation and then we'll plan to open the floor to questions from all of you. If you'd like to ask a question at any point during the webinar, please submit them through the Q&A function

and share your name and affiliation. If you're comfortable, feel free to ask questions throughout. Some of them may be answered through that function by text and some will be answered verbally at the end. We likely won't have the ability to answer all questions and apologize in advance, but if you do have questions that we haven't answered that you'd really like us to answer, we will be sharing emails where you can get in touch with us afterwards. We have enabled closed captioning in English, so you should be able to access these this option by selecting the captions button in Zoom.

Nessa Kenny:

And then finally this webinar is being recorded and we will share slides and the recording later this week. We'll also have a translation of the recording available in several languages and we would appreciate you sharing the slides and the recordings with any colleagues that you think might be interested in applying to the fund. You'll notice that the slides are intentionally rather text heavy and include links. This is by design so that they can be consulted or shared sort of independently from from the recording, and also to provide the links of the resources and the the materials that we referenced throughout. We'll also be putting those in in the chat. With that, I wanted to introduce you to the team. So these are the folks that will be answering your emails, shepherding your proposals through our review process, managing successful awards. So we'll do a quick round of introductions perhaps. Let's go from from left to right on this slide. So I'm Nessa Kenny. I work with Innovations for Poverty Action, and I'm based in New York City. Over to you, Sara.

Sara Merner:

Thanks, Nessa. I'm Sara Merner and I'm working with J-PAL as a policy associate and based in Paris.

Ricardo Morel:

Hello, everyone. I'm Ricardo Morel, director of the Peace and Recovery Program at IPA.

Daphne Schermer:

Hey, everyone. My name is Daphne Schermer. I'm at Innovations for Poverty Action and based in New York City. Over to Tessa.

Theresa Stienen:

Thanks, Daphne. As you just heard, my name is Theresa Stienen, but most people call me Tessa. Please feel free to do so in the future as well. I'm a policy manager at J-PAL based in Paris, as is Sara.

Nessa Kenny:

Right. So we are hoping that today's session will answer the questions that you see on the slide for you. So the first, of course, being what is this new funding initiative? What's our focus? We'll also go over what types of projects are eligible for funding, who is eligible for funding? And we'll walk through a series of proposal tips and tricks we've identified after running several similar funding processes at both IPA and J-PAL. Well, then get into the nitty gritty of our specific restrictions and funding and the upcoming deadlines for the fund. And then finally, of course, this is a collaboration between IPA and J-PAL and we manage slightly different parts of this initiative. So we'll let you know who you should get in contact with if you have questions. The next slide is our agenda for today, which is structured to answer the questions that we just went over. So I'll be providing an overview of the initiative before turning it over to Daphne to provide an overview of what we fund, our evaluation criteria, proposal tips and tricks, and deadlines for the next round; and, then Tessa will be providing an overview of project development incubators that will be running, and then we'll close us out with a summary before we turn it over to Q&A. So who are we? IPA and J-PAL as organizations share the mission to reduce poverty by ensuring that programs and policies are informed by rigorous scientific evidence.

Nessa Kenny:

So there are three shared pillars of our work. The first is that we contribute to generating new evidence. So together over the last 20 years. So both of our organizations are celebrating our 20th anniversary this

year, but in that time we've contributed to over 1700 rigorous evaluations in almost 100 countries. Most of those are randomized evaluations, though, though not all of them are. And this work is really anchored by our country and regional presence in almost 30 countries and by the fact that we work really closely with academic researchers to conduct these these evaluations. In most cases, we we also crowd in research in into new areas. So both by awarding funding to research projects through initiatives like this one and by supporting the development of partnerships between implementing organizations, donors, governments, researchers to produce new evidence. The second major pillar of our work is that we support evidence use. So of course it's not enough for us to just generate new evidence and support new impact evaluations in a given space. We also synthesize and disseminate results and also strategically support partners to apply these results in decision making. And then finally, we provide training. This takes a lot of different forms, but we support folks to both focus on the research side and the practice side to gain the technical and analytical skills to produce and apply evidence throughout their work. So what is the Displaced Livelihoods Initiative? So both both IPA and J-PAL have been involved in much of the first rigorous evidence generation on programs and policies for displaced populations globally.

Nessa Kenny:

But displacement generally is still an area with relatively few rigorous evaluations. And so what this this initiative is, is really an effort to crowd in evidence on one topic in particular, which is supporting and creating sustainable livelihoods for displaced populations and host communities. And this work is generously supported by the IKEA Foundation. And on the next slide, you will see the three kind of main activities that are components of this initiative. The first is facilitating research partnerships, both by having conversations with implementing organizations about programs they're really interested in evaluating in this space and matching them with researchers. So doing a little matchmaking, and then also by hosting incubator workshops, which Tessa will describe a little bit later. The second activity is our bread and Butter will be jointly hosting calls for proposals for impact evaluations and related research over the coming years, where we'll be funding new research through these calls. This is our first round, which is very exciting, but we expect to host rounds roughly every six months or so. And then finally, we will work with grantee teams and practitioners and policymakers to apply findings from the research that we fund and also disseminate this evidence through synthesis syntheses, blog posts, social media, hosting events, those kinds of activities. So you you might be wondering what exactly the scope of this initiative is and whether or not research that you're working on or would like to work on could be a good fit for it.

Nessa Kenny:

So on these this slide is the parameters that we've defined, and this was in consultation with with both our donor and through a series of consultations that we've held with with researchers and policy makers and practitioners over the last several, several months before we launched for for target population. We are interested in research that focuses on displacement affected populations. So this includes populations that are displaced, including persons in need of international protection like refugees, internally displaced persons and also others in in refugee like situations such as Venezuelan migrants, for instance. And this also includes host communities, our understanding of displacement affected populations. A common question that we've gotten that maybe we'll nip in the bud now is what about mixed migration flows? So we we discuss this further in our call for proposals document. But the short answer is that projects addressing mixed flows or mixed groups might be in scope if they do sort of outline how the results from this project can speak to the barriers or opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, for displacement affected populations and kind of how they can be, how these results might be able to be leveraged to inform future programs and policies for the groups that are listed here. So for our our topical focus, we are interested in in generating new evidence on livelihoods' policies and programming, recognizing, of course, that there are many components that make this type of programming and kind of the economic outcomes that it attempts to to impact both sustainable and possible.

Nessa Kenny:

And to that end, we developed the following priority areas for learning through a series, a series of

consultations that we ran earlier this year. The first is resilience. So this is looking at interventions that help individuals recover from displacement as a multidimensional shock and adapt to their new situation and kind of the link between resilience and livelihoods. The second is wage employment, so more straightforward, both formal and informal. The third is entrepreneurship, of course, recognizing that business ownership is an important source of livelihood for many displacement affected populations. The fourth focus area is social cohesion, inclusion and norms. So we're really interested in understanding the relationship between livelihoods outcomes and social and psychosocial outcomes and also vice versa. We also have a thematic focus on rights and regulation. So of course, recognizing that laws and regulations in the place that displaced populations currently are significantly shaped, their livelihoods and trajectories, that's an important component part. And then finally, we have a cross-cutting interest in measurement and design. So we welcome proposals that use innovative designs or develop new measurement strategies that really can help us advance our understanding of displaced livelihoods.

Nessa Kenny:

And Daphne will talk a little bit more about project type that's related to this. Um, for more information about all of this, please consult our call for proposals document. The document also includes a non-exhaustive list of potential research questions that came up in our consultation. So you're welcome to combine questions or develop new questions when submitting proposals provided they're related to our topic, our target group, and our thematic focus. But we gave sort of a list of indicative questions that we've been hearing from folks in this space that people would really like more evidence on. Finally, from me, you might be wondering who to contact about research in given regions. So leveraging our comparative regional presence. IPA will be managing the fund research fund in sub-Saharan Africa, in Asia, and in Latin America. And, J-PAL is managing the fund in Europe and the Middle East and North Africa. If you're looking at this division and thinking, huh, some people consider that country I work in to be in one region and some consider it to be in another region. Have no fear. We have a list where we've identified the region that you should apply to for the purposes of this fund that lists all countries and the organization you should apply to. So that is linked in our documentation generally. And also on this slide. So with that, I'm going to hand it over to Daphne.

Daphne Schermer:

Great. Thanks.

Daphne Schermer:

Hi, everyone. So I'll be walking us through starting with next slide, please. Um, through what type of projects we are funding. So starting with exploratory grants. These grants are meant to develop preliminary research ideas contributing to the development of proposals for pilot or full impact evaluations in future rounds. And so the activities under this grant type may include travel, relationship development, descriptive or observational analysis and data development or collection for projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This funding is earmarked for early career researchers, so researchers who are non tenured and for researchers who are based in lower middle income countries regardless of tenure. For projects in Europe and MENA, the same restriction does not apply. But we strongly encourage this to still be seen as an opportunity for early career researchers and LMIC based scholars. Moving on to pilot studies. These grants are for studies with a clear research question, but which require substantial upfront investments in things like design, measurement and or implementation before a full impact evaluation. Um proposal would be competitive to be submitted and activities are funded under this project type could include testing, developing new measurement strategies or instruments, analysis of existing data, piloting survey questions or new data development or collection. For full studies, these grants are for research projects with a clear research question, committed implementing partners, and a well-defined research design that is using rigorous impact evaluations.

Daphne Schermer:

Scaling support, so our goal here is to produce evidence that researchers and program implementers can

use to inform the design or testing of programs and policies at scale. So acknowledging this and that often that a pathway from evidence to scale may require additional investments. These grants support technical assistance for the adaptation, piloting and implementation at scale of models that have been evaluated by a randomized evaluation. So our last category here are infrastructure and public goods project type. These projects represent a public good for the research community or policy stakeholders through data or tools that can support several research projects or types of analyses, often ultimately supporting the design or implementation of future impact evaluations. We particularly welcome proposals that address barriers to research in hard to reach or under-researched contexts or on under-researched topics. And so this may include the creation of panel data sets, the build out of data software measurement strategies or similar research assets. And, if you have questions about this category, it's a bit unique. Please feel free to ask us and we can talk through some examples that we funded in the past. So moving on to evaluation criteria and thinking about how are these decisions made once you submit a proposal? So projects are awarded funding by a review board of academics that use these five equally weighted criteria. So I'll walk us through the questions that we think about for each of these categories.

Daphne Schermer:

So starting with academic contribution here, we're thinking through does the study make a significant contribution towards advancing knowledge in the field? How does this study compare with the existing body of research? Is the research designed to probe mechanisms? Strong proposals will be probing at the underlying academic theories and mechanisms that drive impact. So moving on to policy relevance here, we're asking, does the study address the priority questions outlined in the research agenda that Nessa highlighted? The broad categories that we broke those down into? We're thinking through will the results from the intervention have generalizable implications? How will the lessons learned have relevance beyond this single study? And does the intervention have the potential to scale? Moving on to technical design in this category, we're asking, does the research design appropriately answer the questions outlined in the proposal? Are there threats that could compromise the validity of results? And if so, does the proposal sufficiently address those threats? And for full study proposals, are there robust power calculations? So we will be requiring those who submit for full proposals to submit power calculations alongside which will be evaluated by our technical colleagues. And moving on to the project viability. Here we're thinking through is the relationship with the implementing partner strong? What is the credibility and policy influence of the implementing partner? Are there any logistical or political obstacles that might threaten study completion? Does the research team have a track record of implementing successful projects similar to the one being proposed? And for pilots, I want to highlight that we will be looking for whether or not the researchers are clearly describing how pilot activities would inform a future full scale randomized evaluation.

Daphne Schermer:

And in the value for money category here, we're asking if the cost of the study is commensurate with the value of expected contributions to science and policy. And we also want to highlight that it's a benefit when studies are able to leverage funding from multiple sources. Several other considerations that we take into account when reviewing submitted proposals include ethics. So we're thinking through whether there are any risks of harm to research participants. And if so, what are the proposed risk mitigation strategies and how do the possible benefits of the research compare to the possible harms? In terms of team diversity, our initiative, we welcome proposals from diverse research teams, and with that in mind, we encourage prospective applicants to consider working both across disciplines and with researchers from the countries where the project will take place and with team members with lived experience of displacement. Okay. Moving on to eligibility. For projects that will take place in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The eligibility requirement is that at least one researcher per project must be an affiliate of an academic institution or university and either hold or be pursuing a PhD.

Daphne Schermer:

For projects that will be based in Europe or the MENA region, the best option for applicants will depend on

if you plan on applying to this call for proposals or future call. So if your timeline requires application to the current round and you're interested in partnering with a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher, please feel free to reach out to eligible researchers yourself or you may fill out this researcher interest form. The link will be dropped in the chat so that we can try to match you with a researcher, an affiliate or invited researcher. You are not required to complete the form that will be dropped in the chat. If you choose to partner with an affiliate or invited researcher yourself. The form is to help facilitate that process if it's of interest to you. Whereas if timelines allow for you to apply to the next round or future calls for proposals and you're interested in joining the J-PAL network as an invited researcher, please also fill in the researcher interest form to help us advise you on your chances of becoming an invited researcher. Lastly, if your timeline requires an application to this round, but you're not interested in partnering with a J-PAL affiliate or invited researcher, please follow the application instructions in the online portal and your application may be recommended for consideration for funding by IPA. And we recognize that some of this kind of breakdown may be a bit confusing; so please feel free to ask us follow up questions on this at the end. And we're happy to walk you through this process a bit further.

Daphne Schermer:

Right. So next, I'll be walking folks through proposal pitfalls and some tips and tricks. So a couple of proposal pitfalls. You'll note that, what I'll be walking through here, these dovetail with the evaluation criteria that I walked through on the previous slide in terms of what we're looking for and what makes a proposal competitive. So regarding low academic contribution. So our goal is to create general knowledge and not to just answer questions of particular interest to a single implementer. So given this, as previously mentioned, we're excited to fund projects that help to develop, illustrate or test innovative interventions, policies and theories where there's limited evidence and that are poised to produce generalizable insights that can be applied to other projects. So we recognize that implementing partners' particular interest often is a great indication for policy relevance and may point to a gap in the academic literature. In terms of policy relevance, we are looking to fund projects that will inform both policy and practice. And with this in mind, we will be assessing proposals for the potential for implementing the intervention at scale, demand from implementing partners for more or better evidence on this topic as well. In terms of poor identification strategy. If the proposal is for a non-RCT, it must seek the most rigorous alternative possible method and must clearly justify why not doing an RCT is possible or why it doesn't make sense. So we ask that you please clearly outline the reasoning behind a project's methodological approach in your submitted proposal.

Daphne Schermer:

For lab in the field experiments, our initiative can only fund such experiments in rare circumstances when it's within the broader context of an impact evaluation. Regarding project stage, as we've kind of emphasized previously, full proposals need to be advanced in the project development process and they must include power calculations. So, if your project does not meet the requirements for like the criteria for a full project, we recommend that you apply for the pilot stage. And if you're unsure of kind of, you know, which stage maybe makes the most sense, please feel free to reach out with any questions regarding that. Regarding bundled programs, we wanted to highlight that we encourage evaluations to try to disaggregate the impacts of different program components and to identify the mechanisms driving this impact. So, as Nessa walked through in terms of you know, the research areas that we're most interested in, you know, there's an evidence base already includes the efficacy on several bundled programs like the graduation approach in this broad kind of like existing evidence base. And we were looking to kind of like move that forward and try to probe into kind of like which pieces of these bundled programs are the ones that are working and why. And so we're looking for our applicants to be highlighting that in our proposals, if that applies to your idea. And then regarding restrictions for exploratory funding, as we've already mentioned, for projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, funding is earmarked for early career researchers and for researchers based in lower middle income countries. Whereas for projects in Europe and MENA, this restriction does not apply.

Daphne Schermer:

So moving on to a couple project development and tips and proposal tips or sorry, that's what you want. Okay, gotcha.

Daphne Schermer:

Moving on through funding restrictions. I'll walk through this verse. Great. Um, a couple restrictions just to highlight on top. Um, this way there's less back and forth when folks filled out their proposal budgets. We are not set up to fund program or intervention implementation costs. We cannot support the salary costs for researchers who are based at institutions in high income countries. We cannot support purely qualitative research that is not contributing to the development or understanding of impact evaluations. As we mentioned, that in the field or several experiments that are not within the context of broader impact evaluation does not fall into our scope and research using historical data sets, um, except in the context of broader impact evaluation also do not fall into our scope for funding. And, so, if you have any project specific questions on any of these, please feel free to email us or drop it into the Q&A function that we'll get to at the end related to these restrictions.

Daphne Schermer:

Then also, I just want to quickly highlight a couple overhead caps here ahead of you all building out proposals' budgets. So the cap for nonprofits or institutions that are based in lower middle income countries is 15%, whereas the cap for universities and high income countries is 10%.

Daphne Schermer:

Great. So a couple project development and proposal tips to quickly walk through with everybody. So please feel free to ask us about your perspective proposal ideas. To do that, we recommend submitting an expression of interest. These are currently open and links can be found on our webpage. And then also feel free to email us if you have other questions and that doesn't make sense for you all. We have a good sense of what projects will be competitive, so we're happy to kind of frontload and preemptively answer any questions you may be having on that front. In terms of connecting with IPA country offices, IPA offices have the ability to support project development in places where we have a presence and sometimes even regionally in neighboring countries to where we physically have an office. The contact information for this outreach can be found in the application instructions posted on our website. Again, if you have any questions about that outreach, please feel free to email us as well.

Daphne Schermer:

We also want to highlight a couple topics that are of less interest to us in terms of proposals that you may be thinking about submitting. So research questions that are replicating previous studies with little innovation or projects that do not address DLI research questions, even if they're generally displacement, aren't of high interest to us. As Nessa mentioned, DLI's research questions and the research areas that we are most excited about and, through a series of consultations with many in this space that we think are poised to really fill evidence gaps, are all outlined in the call for proposals document. So we recommend that you refer to that if you have any questions and then feel free to ask us anything more specific. And then again, another plug to please just apply for exploratory funding if this project type makes sense to you. We are really looking and excited to support early stage ideas that have promise.

Daphne Schermer:

So on this slide, I won't walk through these five these five projects individually. But here we have a couple of examples of previous projects that were competitively funded through similar funds at J-PAL, not through DLI, because the DLI did not exist at that time. But we just kind of wanted to put these here to exemplify what we're excited to fund. And so you'll note that these research questions which are highlighted, they dovetail with the various and complementary research areas outlined in our call for proposals.

Daphne Schermer:

So for example, the project in Uganda is touching on questions relating to both wage employment and social inclusion. There's a project in Bangladesh is probing questions relating to wage, employment rights and regulations and resilience. So the findings from these projects are therefore poised to push our understanding on policy and practice beyond a single study. So I think that's one of the main takeaways that we'd like to emphasize here.

Daphne Schermer:

Great. And then I'll just quickly walk through the upcoming deadlines for everybody. So as you can see here, our expression of interest is currently open for everybody to apply to, and those are due on June 2nd. They are optional for projects in Africa, Asia and in Latin America, but they're required for projects in Europe or MENA. And we will have responses, EOI responses, we will get those back to folks by Friday, June 16th, so the following two weeks. And then the proposal deadline for everyone, regardless of project type, regardless of region, is Friday, July 21st. We will then be announcing awards in October and then as a plug that we will, as Nessa mentioned, plan to have calls for proposals roughly every six months with this initiative. And therefore we will have our round two call for proposals sometime later this year. Great. And then I'm going to pass this on to Tessa, who is going to be walking us through the incubator, project development, and conclusion.

Theresa Stienen:

Thanks a lot, Daphne. Um, so, yes, the incubator workshops are a feature of this, of this, uh, of the, of this initiative. As Nessa mentioned at the very beginning of the presentation, we'll run these incubators as workshops three days, usually led by researchers and J-PAL and IPA staff. So it's another way of engaging with this work. If you'd like to help us teach at one of those workshops. And the workshops are designed to help teams from implementing organizations, in this case, develop a randomized impact evaluation design for one of their programs. So it's really for organizations that have an idea that fits into the scope of DLI and want to further develop that with technical support by us. Um, it's to. To access the incubator workshops, we will have a competitive application process for implementing organizations, there again, to identify promising and in scope research projects. We'll be holding five of these workshops over the coming two years, one in each of the of the major regions that we mentioned in the beginning. So one in Europe, one in Latin America, MENA, sub-Saharan Africa, and then Asia. Why are we mentioning this on the researcher webinar if it's mostly aimed at supporting implementing organizations? So why we want to highlight this here is that for one, these workshops are also, we see them also as a matchmaking opportunity. So if you're here today and you're interested in being, in hearing what type of organizations are thinking about projects that may be in scope and you'd like to possibly teach at one of the one of the sessions, then it may be an interesting opportunity for you to get to know more organizations that work in this space.

Theresa Stienen:

Another area is that if you already have an implementing partner and you feel like both you and the implementing partner may be benefiting from that additional space, um, that we provide and the additional room for you to think and reflect and kind of go through, dive deeply into the nitty gritty aspects of an evaluation design, then you could encourage your implementing partners to apply to one of those implementing, sorry, incubator workshops. The first one of them will take place in mid-October in Paris for the obvious reasons that Sara and I, who are heavily involved in the organization, are based here. So it's kind of the the first one will be easier to organize here. It is important to note that applications will open in June. If you're here today, that means you seem to already know about the ways in which we disseminate information. So please keep looking out for that if you'd like to forward the information later on. And with that, we're actually heading towards the end of the of the of the webinar information session today. One of the things we really love you to do is to get and stay in touch, as I think both Nessa and Daphne emphasize, we're really happy to engage with you and help you answer any questions that you may have about the call for proposals. We're also very happy to support you in identifying, reaching out to, or liaising with relevant, um, with relevant PIs or country offices that may support your work.

Theresa Stienen:

We're very happy to help you think through project designs if that's anything we can be helpful with. We're happy to help you determine whether your project is a good fit for DLI. So so quite a few questions on that in the in the Q&A function and I think some of them we'll get to answer today. But if there's anything that we can't get to today, please don't hesitate to reach out to us separately. There is also always, we're very interested in helping you share the results of your work. So partnering in some of the policy and dissemination work for the down the line is also something we're very happy to do. And then lastly, going back to the last slide that we just saw, if you're interested in learning more about opportunities to engage with the incubators or other forms of trainings that we organize, please don't hesitate to send us an email. With that, this is more of a summary slide that as we're sending the slides out to everybody who registered to this webinar, this is if you don't want to go through the whole slide deck to retrieve your the link that you're looking for, this is your go to slide with all the links and resources that we mentioned throughout. And with that, I think we're going to the Q&A. Sara, what do you have for us?

Sara Merner:

Great. Thank you very much. And thank you for all the questions. We have over 30 questions here in our Q&A. So I've been able to sort them in categories of questions which I'll be able to share with my colleagues. And so to start us off, we have some questions on eligibility. And so the questions on eligibility is, are you only considering academic or university affiliated researchers, or would there also be considerations of research led by think tanks? So I'll ask Nessa to take that one and then we'll move on to the next one after.

Nessa Kenny:

Sure. So for all projects, we require at least one researcher to be affiliated with an academic institution, university and have a PhD or be pursuing a PhD in in a relevant discipline. For J-PAL you saw this sort of additional eligibility criteria around working as well with the J-PAL affiliate or an invited researcher in regions that J-PAL is covering. That doesn't preclude the collaboration of a university affiliated researcher with a think tank. So, for instance, in the past we've funded collaborations between university researchers and the Center for Global Development and think tanks in various regions. So certainly researchers at think tanks can be part of an overall research team. But we require at least one researcher to be affiliated with an academic institution.

Sara Merner:

Great. Thanks, Nessa. And I'll ask you to answer the next one as well. So there's questions along, if there is a strict requirement for RCTs in the initiative and kind of some of the other maybe a bit of background on some of the methodological eligibility as well.

Nessa Kenny:

Yeah. So the vast majority of, of research that we will fund under the full study category will be randomized evaluations. I think the impetus behind this initiative is to build the evidence base on the efficacy and impact of specific programs and policies in this space, which informs the large focus on impact evaluations. In some situations, when an impact evaluation is simply not possible, we would consider other types of designs like regression discontinuities or other types of natural experiments, for instance. But the proposal would need to clearly justify why randomization wasn't possible. I think we do encourage, of course, there to be sort of complimentary qualitative work with impact evaluations. We encourage folks to take advantage of our project development funding, so our exploratory and pilot funding to prepare for evaluations. And then we similarly have these other categories around scaling. So once there is an intervention that's identified as being effective in given contexts, I'm thinking about how to scale that. And then this infrastructure and public goods piece I think is particularly interesting. Under that we funded panel surveys in the past that can be used for by multiple research teams and kind of leverage to start future randomized evaluations. But the project that we're funding in particular is not an impact evaluation. Alternatively, we funded sort of methods, innovations. We funded some work on

measurement of violence, we funded some work on the use of WhatsApp surveys. So I think in that category we're really thinking about projects that that may not be impact evaluations themselves, but could have some future utility for other impact evaluations in this space.

Sara Merner:

Great. Thanks. I'll ask the next question for Tessa. So the question is on implementing partners. And so the question here is what do we define as an implementing partner? And so does this only refer to humanitarian organizations or are and are partners necessary for successful projects? Thinking about pilots that might be more focused on measurement strategies and survey questions. So at what point or which types of projects should be including partners?

Theresa Stienen:

Thanks a lot for the question, Sara, and by extension to the one who asked it. So in terms of implementing partner doesn't have to be a humanitarian organization. I think also saw a few questions about government partners, for example, going through the screen. So it's really. Well, whatever partner helps you study an intervention or a program or a policy that is designed that fostering sustainable livelihoods for displacement affected communities and it can be any type humanitarian by definition or not. In terms of whether partners are necessary for successful projects. That really depends on the type of your project. As Sara already hinted at, some of the, for example, better understanding and measurement tool may not require an implementing partner right away, although much of the work that we try to foster is about understanding the effectiveness of operational or implementing partners' or entities' work. So by kind of necessarily, by definition, to study somebody's work, you need to partner with them, and in most of the cases, to get at the designs, whether course experimental or experimental, that we would like to support.

Nessa Kenny:

Maybe very quickly on the question around whether we require implementing partners for pilots in particular. The answer is yes. So generally for pilot projects, we expect projects to have an identified implementing partner and identified program and a clear research question, but may just require some upfront investments in measurement or thinking through randomization strategies or final bits of relationship development before a full evaluation is possible.

Sara Merner:

Great. Thank you very much. Now, we have had a couple of questions on target group and kind of the scope of the priority and priority questions. So this I'm opening up to Nessa or Tessa, as well as Daphne, Ricardo, if you want to jump in. But in terms of target group, does this include those that were displaced but returned home and those displaced due to extreme weather and as well as those as whether the target group needs to include both displaced and host communities.

Theresa Stienen:

I'm happy to take a first stab and let you complete because I think Nessa actually did a really great job in highlighting that what we really want to get at is projects that help us understand the mechanisms that support that support displacement affected populations. So, um, so if there, if this, for example, if this fits the definition that Nessa outlined, then if the project clearly answers questions that fit the target group that Nessa outlined, then your question, your your project is likely going to be in scope. So due to extreme climate, displacement due to extreme climate, may in many cases fit that criteria. Um, does a project need to include host communities? I would say it's a no, with the caveat that it seems to or is increasingly good practice that programs actually take into consideration what the the the barriers and challenges that host communities also face. So it's to the extent that good programming will take all of the society, all of the displacement affected community into consideration, it's highly encouraged that that is at least considered. Anything to add?

Sara Merner:

Great. We'll open up with another target related question. And if you're proposing a multi study country, so

across regions, so for example, in Bangladesh and in Jordan, would there be guidance on which organizations to submit through? And I see Nessa smiling, so I might suggest that you answer that one.

Nessa Kenny:

Um, it's a great question. I think it might depend on whether or not the two studies can function fully separately or whether or not they're necessarily linked. So, for instance, I'm thinking in one case, perhaps between the border of North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, you want to do a cross border project. That is one single project that necessarily requires you to collect data on both sides of that border. In that case, email us and we'll figure it out. In the case where there's sort of two functional projects that are answering very similar questions that are highly coordinated, we would recommend you submitting proposals to both funds.

Sara Merner:

Great. Thank you very much. Um, now, some questions related to funding and and some of the kind of restrictions or guidelines in our our funding types. So there's one question on if projects need less than the maximum amount listed for specific grant types. Are these still interesting projects and would they be considered to be interesting and should they still apply? And Daphne, if you want to take that one.

Daphne Schermer:

Yeah, I'm happy to. Yeah, they're the max. The max amounts per project type that were identified in the slides and our in our other resources. They are apt for everyone's reference when building out budgets that accurately reflect the expected costs of your project. They are not requirements at all. Um. Yeah. I don't know if anyone wants to add anything.

Nessa Kenny:

I mean. Excuse me. Maybe the one thing I would add is that especially in cases where we're providing top up funding for a project, if you need \$25,000 to finish endline data collection on a project that is inherently in scope for us. Please feel free to apply to us. We will require all of the same requirements that we require for full projects. So we will require, for instance, power calculations and a letter of reference from your implementing partner. Those kinds of things. But yes, we certainly can consider lower budgets. And I think one of the considerations, of course, that we have as well is value for money. We want you to apply for the amount of funding that is necessary to complete the research that you're proposing to us. But we do consider what the costs of that are. Maybe the final funding amount caveat that I would add is that it is possible that in some situations, for instance, in extremely hard to reach areas, our funding cap is not going to be sufficient for you to complete a project. In those cases, we would recommend you apply for the amount of funding that you need, and then we may be able to make exceptions in particular workplace in places where research is extremely expensive to conduct.

Sara Merner:

Thanks, Nessa. The next question is for, I'll say Nessa and Ricardo. If you want to jump in, it'd be really helpful to get a bit more background. There's quite a few questions on funding restrictions, so maybe you could provide some background on whether this call for funds, for call funds, salaries, costs for high income countries, for researchers and non researchers, and whether it funds salary costs for researchers based in lower middle income countries, but that are employed by institutions that are based in high income countries.

Nessa Kenny:

Yeah, those are great questions. So the short answer to whether or not we can fund salaries for researchers in high income countries is no. I think I did see a question as well about soft money and folks that are on soft money grants generally. We. Generally proposals that we receive for from researchers that are on soft money have funding for their salaries from other sort of component funds that that they have applied to for a similar project. Unfortunately, it's not something that we can support. In cases where a researcher is based in a lower and middle income country, we certainly can support salary funding for

them. I would say regardless of their institutional affiliation, provided they're based in a lower and middle income country. Maybe the thing that I would clarify there is that the impetus behind funding salary funding for researchers based in low and middle income countries is to alleviate barriers to their participation in the research. If that ends up being the case because of they need their their time funded, for instance. And so I think that that is that is the goal there. And so I wouldn't encourage you to apply for salary funding for someone who has a position that is already fully funded, given that that may eat away from our opportunity to fund the time of somebody who might not have that opportunity already. Is there anything from the J-PAL side that folks would add?

Theresa Stienen:

Nothing to add. Maybe just the one supplementary information is that some of this is outlined in detail in our application instructions which we put in the chat earlier. So we'd encourage you to really go through the sections about budget instructions and read those in detail and we're happy to answer questions after then. There's also, for both the organizations, there is a budget template that should help you with some of this. Um, but we're obviously happy to help with, with detailed questions further down the line.

Sara Merner:

Great. Thank you very much. So now moving on still into the in kind of submission related question. Um, is it possible to submit multiple submissions and can can a PI be a PI on one project and a co-PI on another? And then as well in this question is would there be a bit more details on off-cycle applications? Okay I'll get Nessa to answer this one as well.

Nessa Kenny:

Sure. Yes. We welcome folks to submit more than one proposal per round, provided you think that it's a good fit. The same applies for universities, so we have no restrictions on the number of proposals that can come to us from a given university or implementing organization. So if you have 20 great projects that you want to send us for our first round, please do. That would be great. The second part of the question, Sara, I'm not forgetting if you could repeat it.

Sara Merner:

Yes, about off-cycle applications and a little bit more background on that.

Nessa Kenny:

Great. Thank you. Yes. So we we do have the ability to accept off cycle applications. I think that the thing that I would caveat there is that they are for exceptional circumstances where it is for some reason impossible to wait until the next round. So very often, for instance, it's in situations where there has been a sudden funding change or alternatively a sudden displacement influx. That's been a case where we have funded projects in the past that require immediate data collection to to allow for the viability of that particular project. And so there needs to be a fair amount of urgency with with our ability to fund off cycle applications. And otherwise we would encourage you to apply in the round, the next upcoming round. Or alternatively, think about sort of applying for for funding in a round prior to you feeling like you actually need to access that funding.

Sara Merner:

Thanks. So this is now questions surrounding grant types and a little bit more of an explanation on certain grant types. So we have a couple questions on whether it's possible to provide a little background on exploratory grants and whether this could be used for the setup of relationships with potential implementing partners and questions on the infrastructure and public goods grant type and whether there could be some examples of what this could look like or what has been funded in the past for this. So you can open the floor to anyone who'd like to answer. Maybe Daphne as well could jump in.

Daphne Schermer:

I can start and then other folks can jump in. So I think the exploratory question you just said Sara was

related to the funding can be used towards development with potential partners. And yes, that's exactly what one of one of the examples of activities that that grant type is set up to support. So that's precisely what we're hoping folks applying would would be wanting to pursue. Um, yeah. So as we previously mentioned, exploratory projects, those are very, very early stage projects that aren't even at the point where, like as Nessa outlined, pilot proposals need to have a clear research question, a clear research design and, potential like not potential but, implementing and research partners secured and in place. And you're really at that stage just kind of like walking through like different tweaks, different, like outstanding questions, maybe technical design ones that one wants to hone and work through before you would be at the point where one would be confident to conduct a full project. But exploratory projects are at an even earlier stage than that, where one doesn't need to have a clear research question or partners in place and whatnot. And therefore exactly what the audience member is asking in terms of development, relationship development, travel, kind of all of that is what would fall under that category. So that would be exactly what we're looking to support.

Daphne Schermer:

And then in terms of the public goods category of projects, Nessa highlighted a couple examples, but I can walk through those a little bit more. So one example of those was a what we call kind of like methodological tool or innovation, um, that we funded or is an automated WhatsApp survey tool that our grantees built out. And it was specifically in this case used to survey displaced folks. One of the applications was with Syrian refugees and then another one was with Venezuelan refugees in Colombia. And the innovation there was that it's highly mobile population. It's really hard to even be in contact with this population and therefore to conduct research. This tool made that possible. And why it was it's a great example of what we're looking to fund is because it can be applied to future randomized evaluations. It can be used by the research community and folks for future studies. This tool can then be applied for someone in a different region of the world looking to survey a highly mobile population. And so we're looking to support and like another example of something that we've supported was a project that was a panel dataset on Rohingya refugees on Bangladesh. And so at that point, like there had not been a census that had been built out of all this demographic information on this population. And the insights from that, you know, have like multiple different kind of public good effects. So like one was that there were a lot of takeaways in terms of like, who are these folks? Like, what is the demographic makeup of these refugees? And I think one of the takeaways is that there's a large population of like children and women. And so that can help inform, you know, practitioners and like what type of services perhaps should be targeting these folks. And then also given that now there is a penalty set to be used to leverage and to build and design future, RCTs is kind of another use that that provided. So yeah, exactly as we've previously highlighted, these projects are ones where you're building out a tool and innovation data set that is going to be the foundation and the backbone for something that can be then leveraged to develop and implement more, more and like different studies in the future if that hopefully provides some clarity.

Sara Merner:

Definitely. Thanks, Daphne. So we have a couple more questions. Hopefully we can wrap up on the hour. Um, Nessa, there's a question on whether piloting an intervention before the proposal submission will affect the likelihood of securing funding or what's the impact of also piloting proposed interventions that will then be proposed.

Nessa Kenny:

Yeah, it's a great question. We we tend to fund evaluations of programs that have established track records. So I think in part because that informs the types of impacts we might expect to have, in part because all of the we know that the implementation tweaks have already been kind of made and worked out prior to investing in an impact evaluation. Impact evaluations are obviously very costly and investing in an impact evaluation for an untested program or a program that hasn't sort of made the implementation tweaks along the way. Is a is a greater risk than funding an evaluation of a program that perhaps has been piloted at the very least, I would say has been piloted or potentially we are funding an evaluation of the

second or third or fourth life cycle of a particular program. So yes, we would encourage there to be a fair amount of of piloting, of an intervention prior to us evaluating it just so that we can know that the implementation will go smoothly. During the evaluation, we consider the viability of the intervention quite highly when thinking about the viability of the project overall.

Sara Merner:

Great. Thanks. And maybe to two more rapid fire ones or three more if we can fit it in. Nessa, can implementing partners be the prime applicant for this call? And so is there anything specific relating to kind of researchers serving as a contractor or subgrantee?

Nessa Kenny:

So generally our modal grantee is a university or a survey firm. I think we're open to having a conversation about that. I think especially in particularly hard to reach areas where research may need to be embedded with implementation. But generally we expect research, our grantees to be universities or survey firms that are implementing the research. So an organization like an IPA Country Office or a J-PAL regional office that is actually directly implementing work or a survey firm that's directly implementing surveys. Or alternatively a university that then subcontracts to a survey firm.

Sara Merner:

Great. Thank you. And two last questions that I'll combine in one is, would you have any advice for PhD students that would like to apply in their applications? And how do we know when incubator workshops are open for applications and for more information?

Theresa Stienen:

I'll start with the incubator workshop. So there's a few ways you can learn about them. Follow us on LinkedIn. Both IPA and J-PAL. Follow us on Twitter. Both IPA and J-PAL. Sign up to our newsletters where we are probably going to send this out. Um, so those are a few ways of, of, of engaging. If you already know that you really want to know about this, send us an email so we can already, you know, put a reminder that we share the information with you once it's out. Um. On the advice for PhD students I'm not quite sure I'm the very best person on this call to answer. Maybe. Daphne, do you want to wrap us up there?

Daphne Schermer:

I can start and then Nessa can hop in if she wants to add anything. Um, so for PhD students, broadly speaking, the exploratory project type that we've mentioned many times is very much so set up to fund and support these early stage ideas of PhD students. So we likely would point potential applicants towards that project type because in terms of like the scope and everything that we've walked through of like what that project type is looking to support probably aligns most with where a PhD student would be at with their research. And as we mentioned, for projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, it is earmarked for for you all. So I think that's one of the main things that I would mention. Um, yeah. I don't know if there's anything else you would like in terms of like if a PhD student is partnering with researchers and are applying for other stage projects, I don't know if there's anything specifically to emphasize like we wouldn't that if one is a PhD student and you're on a broader research team and you're applying for another project type, that's not a red flag to us. I don't know if like the question is trying to probe at, you know, do we have do we care about like the seniority of folks or something like that on a research team, as we emphasized, and Nessa please jump in, is like we are we encourage like diverse research teams in terms of like discipline and expertise and that includes like varying levels of tenure and like we would, we would only be excited to support teams that are bringing in folks who are bringing different things to the table. And if a PhD student makes sense to be a part of a team for a different level of different project type that are very encouraged to apply.

Sara Merner:

Great. And with that, I think I'll hand it back over to Nessa. That was the conclusion of the Q&A. So thanks for all the questions and please send us an email if you have further questions.

Nessa Kenny:

Great. Very quickly, I just wanted to, to display the the page with our email addresses. So they're up here. If you need to get in contact with us, please reach out if you have further questions. Thank you so much for your participation today. As we mentioned, the slides and the recording will be distributed later this week. But thank you so very much for for joining and we really look forward to your proposals. Have a great rest of your day.

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