

Press release

Innovative research grants in Africa, Asia and Latin America helping improve lives of millions of people

3ie announced its first round grants of US\$4.3 million for better evidence and development effectiveness

New Delhi, 16 June 2009 - The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) announced today the results from its first round of funding for impact evidence. Eighteen high quality impact evaluations have been selected under the 3ie open window, with more than half of the funded projects being in Africa.

“Critical to keeping the G8 promise of boosting aid by \$50 billion by 2010, is the need for better evidence on what works, what does not work and why. While millions are being pledged each year, it is quite alarming to see that we have learned very little when it comes to evaluating the real impact of most anti-poverty interventions,” said Howard White, Executive Director of 3ie.

“With the current economic crisis, it has become even more urgent to get value for money. Financing high-quality impact evaluations and campaigns to inform better program and policy design in developing countries will be crucial to ensure this,” he added.

The selected research projects present rigorous evaluation designs to track the impact of technology, in-kind and financial incentives, and the level of community participation on the effectiveness of interventions in education, health, agriculture, social protection, and environmental sectors. These also include the appraisal of two national flagship programs in Mexico and Mozambique focusing on access to child care and early childhood development services.

From these studies, leaders and decisions makers will learn about:

Texting disease away in Pakistan. The treatment for tuberculosis is long, complicated and can cause uncomfortable side-effects. As a result, about 40 per cent of patients worldwide do not complete the full course of treatment and we are now facing the rapid emergence of drug resistant bacteria. A mobile phone based health project in Karachi will help monitor patients’ compliance to Tuberculosis treatment by having them text their daily urine test results to a central database in exchange for phone credits.

Distributing cooking oil to compensate for dowry to delay adolescent marriage in remote parts of Bangladesh. The intervention will involve 45,000 adolescent girls between the age of 10 and 17 and examine the effect of non-cash incentives on postponing the marriage and improving the girls’ health and wellbeing. The effect of these incentives will be compared to those of community mobilization and educational support.

Hairdressers distributing female condoms in HIV-stricken Zambia. In a country with one of the highest adult prevalence rate in the world of over 14 percent,

non-profit and public organisations are increasingly relying on the service of community members to promote and deliver health goods. Barbers, hair stylists and other members are ideally positioned to become change agents and promote female condoms. The findings of the research will help design effective rewards and cash incentive schemes for community agents.

Improved cook stoves with a microchip inbuilt to monitor usage and reduce the rate of lower respiratory infections - biggest killer disease in North Ghana. The intervention seeks to identify the impact of improved stoves on carbon emissions and health of the households.

Early Childhood Development Centres to provide access to critical healthcare and psychological support in Mozambique. Programs to provide care and protection to children at an early stage of life are critical in Africa where children face the risks of diseases, malnutrition, conflict and low-quality education. More than half a million children orphaned by HIV/AIDS have access to those centres. The findings will help inform the Government national strategy to strengthen children's learning and create a pre-primary school year for five-year-olds.

Analyzing the effects of Mexico's new daycare program. The research will examine the impact on employment and earnings of mothers and family members, and how daycare access affects the children's development.

600 students in Ghana to receive a 4-year scholarship to attend senior secondary school. Ghana set a goal to achieve universal access to senior secondary education by 2020. The project will track 1,800 students for 10 years with the help of cell-phones, and will help the government reshape the scholarship scheme and provide information about the benefits of scholarships on future labour market and health outcomes.

High-quality low-cost housing provided to 400 slum dwellers in Peru. The research will evaluate whether slum-housing upgrading should be considered as a cost-effective policy to improve the living conditions, health and welfare of the poor.

Reducing anemia of rural children in China through cash transfers. Up to 20 to 30 million children suffer from anemia in the country, which leads to learning problems and problems of educational performance. Surveys and testing will be conducted in 72 schools.

Innovative evaluation to measure the level of participation in a community driven development pilot in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The evaluation will examine to what extent decisions in a community are participatory by offering a choice between public and private good gifts, and help the democratisation of decision making at the community level.

First assessment of Indonesia's unconditional cash transfer program designed to help poor families recover from the massive reduction in fuel subsidies. A team of local researchers will fill the gap in understanding the effectiveness and impact of the policy.

Seventy-eight proposals were received, each of which was initially reviewed by two external and one internal reviewers, with shortlisted proposals being discussed by a panel of eleven reviewers.

3ie is a new initiative that responds to demands for better evidence, and will enhance development effectiveness by promoting better informed policies. It works to improve the lives of people in the developing world by supporting the production

and use of evidence on what works, when, why and for how much.

Project's overviews are available at:

<http://www.3ieimpact.org/page.php?pg=round1>

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