

Evidence Action Policy Plan

September 2023

Overview of Evidence Action

Evidence Action was spun out of Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) in 2013 to bridge the gap between field-tested research on what works and at-scale solutions that improve the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

Everything we do is grounded in three key principles:

1. **Evidence-based:** Our programs are driven by robust evidence; we go where the data takes us. This starts with the interventions we select and continues through our use of outcomes-based monitoring to make decisions based on real-time data.
2. **Cost-effective:** We pursue the biggest impact at the lowest cost. We economize without compromise, and optimize every aspect of our programs to reach as many people – and do as much good – as possible with every dollar.
3. **At scale:** We are unrelenting in our pursuit of results at scale. We invest in solutions for which the need is great, and leverage existing infrastructure and networks to grow rapidly and reach hundreds of millions of people.

We aim to be a world leader in scaling evidence-based and cost-effective programs, and to be audacious in changing the way development is done, multiplying several-fold the impact of government and donor dollars in directly improving the lives of the poor.

Current programs

Deworm the World has spent the last decade scaling school-based deworming programs across Africa and Asia. Impact assessments show dramatic reductions in worm prevalence in the geographies we support. By leveraging existing education infrastructure, school-based deworming is highly cost-effective at less than \$0.50 per treatment, and as low as \$0.05 in India. Our program model is backed by rigorous evidence that shows deworming increases school participation, child weight gain, and future income (a thorough review of the evidence can be found at our website).

Equal Vitamin Access: The biggest challenge in the fight against iron deficiency anemia (which affects 600 million children globally and can cause disabilities and death) isn't finding treatments that work – it's getting treatments to children who need them. We're leveraging our Deworm the World network — our school-based delivery system — to provide iron and folic acid supplements to school children who are at risk for anemia. We're scaling up this intervention first in India, and then will bring it to other countries where we're working — possibly combining with deworming as a package that will produce cost-savings by sharing operational resources.

Safe Water Now provides access to safe water through our integrated set of treatment solutions — chlorine dispensers and in-line chlorination. This program is based on rigorous evidence from randomized-controlled trials (RCT) conducted in western Kenya between 2004 and 2010, which demonstrated that adoption of this water treatment intervention was more than 5x higher than baseline adoption. Chlorine dispensers were also the most cost-effective water treatment intervention evaluated by J-PAL in a 2012 study. And research by Nobel Laureate Michael Kremer finally quantified the lifesaving impact that safe water can have on children — his study showed that water treatment can reduce under five deaths from all causes by 25%.

Our network of chlorine dispensers provides access to safe water to 10 million people as of 2023 in rural communities across Kenya, Uganda, and Malawi. Complementary to the dispensers is in-line chlorination – our next generation solution that treats communal piped water sources – which we're scaling up in more urban areas.

Syphilis-Free Start: Maternal syphilis causes more stillbirths and infant deaths than HIV, yet it's very treatable with a single shot of penicillin. We're working with governments to scale up syphilis screening and treatment for pregnant women through the use of a low-cost dual HIV/syphilis test. Our early success in Liberia – where we've trained and provided supplies to nearly all health facilities in the country – has led us to continue to expand this program into other countries in Africa where the prevalence rate is high.

New program development

Accelerator: The Accelerator is our engine for new program development — it’s how we find the interventions that have the most potential to change millions of lives in cost-effective ways. Through a rigorous evaluation process, our Accelerator looks for ready-to-scale interventions that have a strong evidence base for success and that are extremely cost-effective.

We designed our Accelerator as a six-stage process — each intervention must pass strict criteria in order to move on to the next step, so those that make it to the end are proven to be fully-developed solutions that can be scaled and replicated in communities. The six stages of the Accelerator are: Screening, Rapid Review, Deep Dive, Scope & Design, Launch, and Test At Scale.

Sustainability

Evidence Action’s expenditure was \$32.5 million in 2022, and is expected to grow in future years as we expand our programs. We have a keen focus on financial and environmental sustainability.

Water chlorination averts greenhouse gases, generating carbon credits that help sustain our safe water programming. By eliminating the need to boil water, chlorination creates “savings” in carbon emissions which, once certified, can be traded as carbon credits. The UNFCCC employs a rigorous audit process and has approved millions of carbon credits generated by Dispensers for Safe Water, which we reinvest directly into the program.

On the financial side, the majority of our funding comes from foundations and individuals with which we have long-term relationships — our success in cultivating these sources has grown as our track record builds. However, we are thoughtful about ensuring sufficient financial safeguards, including a focus on securing multi-year grants where possible. We are also prioritizing building organizational and program reserves as well as our overall unrestricted base, the latter contributing to our ability to be nimble and responsive to arising opportunities.

Governance

Evidence Action is registered as a corporation under the District of Columbia Non-Profit Corporation Act of 2010. It has tax exempt status from the United States Internal Revenue Service under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (Employer Identification Number 90-0874591). It is recognized as a public charity and contributions received by it are tax deductible under the Code.

Evidence Action is governed by an independent Board of Directors. These board members are not compensated for services rendered as directors and are reimbursed for travel and other reasonable costs associated with performing their duties. The Chief Executive Officer is also a Director of the Board and receives compensation in the capacity of CEO, with the Board approving such compensation annually. Under its Articles of Association and bylaws, the Board has delegated the authority for the day to day management of Evidence Action to the CEO and the leadership team who implement a system of internal controls to safeguard the assets. No member of the board is able to dispose of any assets of the corporation for personal benefit and on dissolution or liquidation, the remaining assets are to be distributed to an organization/s that are organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes and are tax exempt under the federal tax code. The board meets at least twice a year. The members of the board are:

Shikhar Ghosh (Chair)

Amrita Ahuja

Kanika Bahl (CEO)

Dina Pomeranz

Christina Riechers

Dr. Owens Wiwa

Elizabeth Young McNally

Evidence Action is committed to transparency. It maintains a website (evidenceaction.org) on which its annual report, audited financial statements and federal tax return, the form 990, are published.