

# IPA Communications Support on Bangladesh Masks Study: Short Proposal

In this document, IPA outlines proposed roles, activities, and outputs to effectively promote and communicate the research and results of the masks RCT in Bangladesh. The plan would begin immediately and last through the initial dissemination phase of the research with the **main goals of a) optimizing the impact of the research and b) mitigating risks**. We propose a six month, \$75,000-105,000+ engagement through the roles and activities described below.

## IPA's Roles

IPA will lead the following communications roles per this plan:

- *Centralized coordination and project management*: IPA will serve as a central node for communications on the masks study to ensure a coordinated effort and synchronized messaging on the research and results, streamlining the process for Givewell and the PIs.
- *Lay the groundwork for policy influence*: IPA will queue up materials and contacts which, depending on the outcomes of the study, will enable a quick and seamless transition to an advocacy phase. This will include mapping stakeholders & engagement stewards (i.e. who is the lead "influencer"), leveraging researchers, Givewell, IPA staff, and partners and producing polished policy-facing materials (see "deliverables").
- *Marketing and risk mitigation*: IPA will draft and execute a risk-management strategy to prepare for any low-likelihood but high risk scenarios. As part of this, IPA will bring on a marketing and risk management consultant whom we trust to provide high-level oversight, as well as marketing and messaging expertise.
- *Producing clear, high-quality study outputs*: IPA has a track record of producing readable, high quality communications products that accurately and clearly communicate results to different audiences with varying levels of technical background. In addition to written materials, including clear, accurate summaries and briefs, IPA may also hire a film production company and/or photographer to communicate the study with images and storytelling. IPA will also review and facilitate PI/partner review of Givewell's communications products as needed.
- *Media outreach, messaging, and monitoring*: IPA has strong relationships with nearly every major media outlet that covers research, public health, and international development, including NPR, NYT, Vox, Quartz, and will work to find the best reporters for the story, organize interviews, and work to ensure the message is right. For public health coverage, IPA will seek additional expertise, starting with but not limited to Steve and Ashley. IPA will send out a press release over the wire using EurekaAlerts and also monitor media in the U.S., Europe, and Bangladesh for coverage of the research, working to control messaging and mitigate mis-messaging.

- *Coordinating with data quality team:* IPA has processes in place for quality checking results and checking data to ensure results are as solid as possible before going public. The comms team will coordinate with that team and PIs to ensure it happens in a timely way.
- *Partner and PI engagement and coordination:* IPA will coordinate communications with Givewell, partners, and university comms teams to make sure all actors are informed of the plan, credited, and that the release adheres to any journal embargo rules. IPA will also help write, pitch, and edit op-eds for PIs (ghost written or co-authored).

## Key Activities & Outputs

### Pre-results (estimated Dec 2020-Feb 2021)

- Develop robust communications strategy, timeline
  - Map key stakeholders to influence at each level/audience → assign key steward within internal team per stakeholder
  - Determine if any stakeholders require formal engagement (i.e. steering committee, roundtable discussions) + plan those; otherwise 1-1 engagement
  - Socialize and share communications plan with PIs, GW, IPA to align goals and understand roles (including PI roles vis a vis stakeholder map); set-up regular check-in meetings (or add to existing agenda)
  - Plan for and begin development the following materials (as laid out below)
  - Set up communications calendar, other tools for quick approvals
- Monitor and manage communications challenges, risks, threats
  - Place specialist comms firm on retainer, prep them with background: IPA would identify and engage a communications firm that specializes in risk mitigation/management to be available in the case of a communications crisis arising from misinterpretation, or null or negative results. Note: The “upper-bound” proposed budget would cover the cost of having the firm briefed and on call, but additional funds would be needed if the firm had to be pulled in to manage a crisis after results are out.
  - Monitor/manage local political sensitivities/government relations
- Draft results become available
  - ‘Internal’ sharing and discussion (GW/PIs)
  - Align internally on key messages for different stakeholder groups
  - Develop all products mentioned below
  - Ongoing review of written materials w crisis comms lens
  - Share privately with selected stakeholders (as outlined in the stakeholder map + engagement plan)
  - Agree on final products, public talking points, and who shares which messages (i.e. assign stewards for messages)
- Queue up media releases and exclusives in coordination w university press offices

## Public release (estimated April/May 2021):

- Coordination of release across institutions, including with researchers and their universities, partners in Bangladesh, with Givewell, and IPA
- Media liaison → team agrees that all media or public speaking requests are routed through IPA; IPA agrees to coordinate w press offices as appropriate and do background for journalists / journal embargo / media package coordination, including media outreach, embargoed press release, and EurekaAlert
- Press conference talking points or other public presentation creation, coaching, and rehearsal for PIs, Givewell, IPA leadership
- Social media monitoring and management
- Launch deliverables:
  - Blog post (s) for global audience (target 2)
  - Op-ed (s) for local and/or global audiences (target 2)
  - Plain-language summary w/results for all audiences (1)
  - Media outreach and press package
  - Policy brief with graphs, visuals
  - Film and photography (included in “upper-bound” budget, see below )
- Post-mortem reflection & learning meeting

## Post public release / advocacy phase (beyond grant scope)

- *Ongoing media monitoring*: Continued media monitoring after the initial release phase of the results would require additional staff time/funding (beyond the six-month time frame)
- *Engagement in advocacy*: If results are positive and policy-worthy, it might be advisable to engage IPA’s senior policy leads and/or a lobbying or advocacy firm to persuade major institutions to adjust or strengthen policies around mask-wearing and the types of masks to recommend. Hiring a firm or leading advocacy-related meetings and events is beyond the scope of this grant.
- *Additional writing and/or design work beyond the scope of this grant*: For example, if it’s determined that additional writing, graphics or data visualizations are needed, not outlined in the below “Deliverables” section, that would need to be outsourced by IPA or Givewell.

## Budget

IPA proposes a six-month engagement of a base cost of \$75,000, with a few flexible options to add on additional costs allowing additional deliverables.

- **Personnel (IPA & Consultants): \$60,000-75,000**  
Personnel includes both leadership of the communications plan, writing, and media/social media engagement (ranging from 5-15% FTE from IPA communications team , as well as 1-1.5 days a week of project management and strategy support, which may come from a combination of IPA staff and consultants.
- **Production (Content generation & Design): \$15,000-\$30,000**  
Production includes relevant graphic design for deliverables, as well as optional outsourcing of a video and/or high quality photography.
- **Contracts (Comms firms US & Bangladesh): Free-???**  
We have started to reach out to different firms we know, and so far the cost of engagement looks to vary wildly based on our existing connections and what we will need them to prepare for or execute. Part of the first deliverable will be to recommend a clear risk mitigation plan, including the potential to hire a firm both globally and in Bangladesh.

## Deliverables

- Communications strategy document (inc. risk management strategy and contract recommendations)
- Policy stakeholder & stewardship map
- Project summary
- Policy brief w/graphs and photos
- IPA blog post
- Feedback on Givewell blog posts
- Press release/packet
- Social media posts
- Ghost writing or editing at least 2 draft op-eds by Pls
- Optional (pending results + upper bound funding):
  - High-profile media outreach
  - Webinar
  - Film
  - Photography