

Gerald Jona Ipapa Etarukot

Postdoctoral Fellow, Georgetown University

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Fields

Primary: Development Economics; Economics of Education and Human Capital; Labor Economics. Secondary: Environmental Economics; Forced Displacement and Refugees.

Education

- **Ph.D., Economics**, University of Delaware, 2024. Committee: Adrienne Lucas (chair), Francisco Costa, Sabrin Beg, Kimberly Oremus.
- **M.S., Economics and Applied Econometrics**, University of Delaware, 2021.
- **M.A., International Development**, Georgetown University, 2019. *Thesis of the Year*.
- **B.S., Mathematics and Statistics**, Egerton University, Kenya, 2010.

Academic Appointments

- **Postdoctoral Fellow**, gui2de / McCourt School of Public Policy, Georgetown University, 2024 to present.

Other Professional Experience

- **Consultant**, World Bank, 2018 to 2020; 2024 to present.
- **Senior Research Fellow / Research Manager / Coordinator / Associate / Data Analyst**, Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), Kenya, 2010 to 2017 and 2020. Managed impact-evaluation portfolios (budgets approaching USD 1M) for M. Kremer, E. Miguel, P. Jakiela, O. Ozier, D. Pomeranz, and L. Casaburi.

Publications

- Brudevold-Newman, A., M. Honorati, **Ipapa, G.**, P. Jakiela, and O. Ozier (2024). “A Firm of One’s Own: Experimental Evidence on Credit Constraints and Occupational Choice.” *Review of Economics and Statistics*. [doi:10.1162/rest_a_01529](https://doi.org/10.1162/rest_a_01529)

Working Papers

- **Ipapa, G.** “The Hidden Costs of Recycling: Lead Exposure and Student Learning.” *Job Market Paper*. Estimates the causal effect of battery-recycling lead exposure on children’s learning in Kenya using national administrative test data; losses are twice as large at schools closest to the plants and exceed the gains from leading school-based interventions.

Work in Progress

- “Saturating the Safety Net: Cash Transfers, Skills, and Spillovers in an Urban Refugee Economy,” with A. Zeitlin, B. Jack, and A. Wendo. Randomized saturation-design RCT, ~4,000 refugee and host households, urban Nairobi; AEA-registered pre-analysis plan. Baseline and three quarterly follow-ups complete; endline underway.
- **Ipapa, G.** “Groundless Claims: Property Rights When Land Ceases to Exist.” Extends the Besley (1995) framework to climate-driven land loss; calibrated to Kenya’s Rift Valley lakes. Draft in preparation.
- **Ipapa, G.** “Property Rights, Climate Displacement, and Household Welfare: Evidence from Kenya’s Rising Lakes.” Tests how tenure status shapes compensation, adaptation, and recovery after slow-onset displacement, combining satellite-derived lake-expansion measures (2005–2025) with a planned household survey.
- **Ipapa, G.** “Cash, Caregiving, and the Youngest Refugees: Early Childhood Development Effects of Unconditional Transfers and Business Training in Displaced Households in Nairobi.” Adds a dedicated early-childhood-development arm (ages 0–8; CREDI and IDELA assessments) to the Nairobi cash-and-training RCT, identifying effects of pairing training with cash and of earlier cash receipt, plus community-level spillovers. Study design phase.

- “Livelihoods, Allocation, and Early Childhood Development in Refugee Graduation Programs,” with A. Zeitlin and G. Ayesiga. Graduation programs in two Uganda refugee settlements (Palabek and Kiryandongo): a natural experiment from a program discontinuation and a randomized staggered rollout of playgroup and coaching components. Study design phase.
- “Closing the Chain: From Used Lead-Acid Battery Recycling to Children’s Blood Lead, Learning, and Policy in Kenya,” with A. Basu, A. Mitra, and K. Schilling. Lead-isotope source attribution, blood-lead biomonitoring, and learning assessments for 3,120 children across the 26 recycling sites of the job market paper’s natural experiment and matched controls, delivering an in-situ blood-lead-to-learning dose-response from an informal-recycling setting. Study design phase.

Research Funding

- J-PAL Social Protection Initiative, Full RCT Award (Co-PI), urban refugee cash-transfer RCT: USD 81,340 (2026).
- IKEA Foundation (Co-PI), urban refugee cash-transfer RCT: USD 691,000 (2024); USD 92,237 (2025).
- J-PAL King Climate Action Initiative, Research Travel and Project Development Grant (PI), 2022.
- IZA/DFID Growth and Labour Markets in Low-Income Countries (GLM-LIC) (Co-PI), 2018.

Honors and Fellowships

- Sally Latham Dissertation Research Award, University of Delaware, 2024.
- Sloan/Berkeley Environmental and Energy Economics Fellowship, 2023.
- Philadelphia Federal Reserve Mentorship Fellowship, 2023.
- University of Delaware Summer Research Fellowship, 2022.
- Georgetown University Thesis of the Year, 2019.

Invited Talks and Conference Presentations

- 2025: First Annual Research Conference on Global Lead Exposure (Washington, DC).
- 2023: AERC Senior Policy Seminar XXV (Nairobi); Sloan/Berkeley Graduate Workshop in Environmental and Energy Economics (Berkeley); Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia; AERE Energy, Environment and Transportation Workshop; University of Delaware Economics Seminar.

Teaching

- **Instructor of record**, Development Economics (undergraduate), University of Delaware, 2023 to 2024.
- **Graduate Teaching Assistant** (Microeconomics, Macroeconomics), University of Delaware, 2019 to 2022; Georgetown University, 2017 to 2019.

Professional Service

- Founder and organizer, Graduate Student Research Seminar, University of Delaware.
- Founder, AfriKa Policy Students Association, Georgetown University.
- Referee, *Research in Comparative and International Education*.

Skills and Languages

- Software: Stata, R, Python, Julia, MATLAB; SurveyCTO, CsPro, Blaise; Git/GitHub, LaTeX, Quarto; large-data management.
- Languages: English (fluent), Kiswahili (fluent), Ateso (native), Luhya (basic).

References

- **Owen Ozier**, Associate Professor of Economics, Williams College. oo3@williams.edu.
- **Adrienne Lucas**, Professor of Economics, University of Delaware. alucas@udel.edu.
- **Andrew Zeitlin**, Professor, Georgetown University. andrew.zeitlin@georgetown.edu.