

J-PAL E-UPDATE NO. 5 - DECEMBER 2008

ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL
Poverty Action Lab
 TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO ACTION



Massachusetts Institute of Technology

J-PAL e-Update, December 2008

J-PAL Turns Five

J-PAL celebrates its fifth anniversary this year—five years that have transformed the emphasis given to rigorous evidence based policy in development and poverty research. Both governments and donors are recognizing how it can help make their programs more effective.



Most of the largest foundations, international NGOs, and agencies now fund or run randomized impact evaluations. And other major new initiatives reveal the determination to fill the evidence gap. [READ MORE](#)

Training for Action

A recent survey of J-PAL executive course participants shows that many are actively implementing rigorous evaluations.



Over the past five years, our executive training courses have reached over 400 participants from across the globe. Our survey shows almost two-thirds have sought opportunities to run randomized evaluations, more than one-third have initiated randomized evaluations, and 90 percent have delivered presentations on randomization to colleagues.

[READ MORE](#)

Partner Spotlight: Seva Mandir

Seva Mandir is one of J-PAL's oldest and most established partners—first randomizing additional teachers into non-formal schools in 1997. Today, Seva Mandir remains a pioneer—implementing new strategies to improve the lives of the poor and testing them through randomized evaluations.

Working in remote, tribal communities in the often harsh environment of the mountains around Udaipur, Rajasthan, Seva Mandir recently

J-PAL ON THE MAP



NEW HEADS OF J-PAL SOUTH ASIA



J-PAL welcomes our new heads of J-PAL South Asia, Clara Delavallade and Thomas Bossuroy. [READ MORE](#)

J-PAL IS HIRING

[Senior Policy Researcher wanted to lead cross-sector cost effectiveness reviews.](#)

J-PAL IN THE NEWS

Esther Duflo named one of *Esquire* magazine's best and brightest.

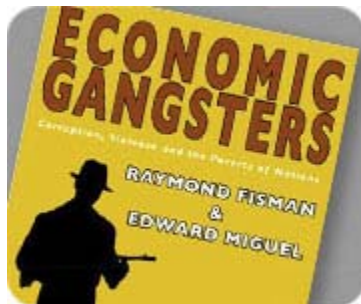
President Clinton honors commitment to deworm 10 million children and the work of Deworm the World at the 2008 annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative. [WATCH THE SPEECH](#)

Q&A with J-PAL Director Esther Duflo in the *International Herald Tribune* [READ MORE](#)

celebrated its 40th anniversary. [READ MORE](#)

Fighting Economic Gangsters with Randomization

[Economic Gangsters](#), by J-PAL member Edward Miguel, and coauthor Raymond Fisman, uses economics to understand conflict and corruption. Pointing to a revolution that started in Busia, Kenya, with the randomization of school inputs, the authors show how more randomized experiments can help fight economic gangsters around the world.



Unemployment Programs in France

J-PAL Europe researchers are working with the French government to find effective strategies to get workers at risk of long-term unemployment back to work.

[READ MORE](#)

Call for Evidence in Delhi

A top-level workshop in Delhi on September 19 called for more rigorous evaluations of poverty reduction and other social programs in India. Speakers included Michael Anderson, head of Department for International Development (DFID) in India, Gobind Nankani (GDN), Abhijit Sen from the Planning Commission, Amit Agarwal from the Prime Minister's office and Howard White from 3IE.

J-PAL Alum Network Formed

If you or someone you know worked for J-PAL and wants to keep in touch with other former RAs to share ideas and spread the message please contact paul.c.wang@gmail.com or neilbuddy.shah@gmail.com.

Sign Up for Our Updates

If you are not currently receiving J-PAL publications and updates and wish to be added (or removed) from our electronic and postal mailing lists, please contact us at povertyactionlab@mit.edu

GlobalGiving features Seva Mandir's immunization program.

[READ MORE](#)

NEW PAPERS

[The Experimental Approach to Development Economics](#)

by Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo.

[Pitfalls of Participatory Programs: Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation in Education in India](#)

by Abhijit Banerjee, Rukmini Banerji, Esther Duflo, Rachel Glennerster, Stuti Khemani.

[Mandated Empowerment: Handing Antipoverty Policy Back to the Poor?](#)

by Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo.

[Put Your Money Where Your Butt Is: A Commitment Contract for Smoking Cessation](#)

by Dean Karlan, Xavier Gine and Jonathan Zinman.

[Direct Democracy and Local Public Goods: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia](#)

by Ben Olken.

THE NAME OF THE DISEASE

A [documentary](#) by Abhijit Banerjee shares voices from inside India's health system (including patients, government officials, and shamans), building an image of what it is like to be poor and sick in rural India.

NEW J-PAL BRIEFCASE

Check out our [new briefcase](#) on how to curb teacher absenteeism.

[The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab](#) (J-PAL) in the MIT Department of Economics is dedicated to fighting poverty by ensuring that policy decisions are based on scientific evidence. We run, promote the use of, and disseminate the results of randomized evaluations of poverty programs.