



## J-PAL e-Update, February 2010

### Scientific Evidence Takes Center Stage in Bihar, India



Inaugurated by the Deputy Chief Minister, Honorable Shri Sushil Kumar Modi, on January 15, 2010, the first J-PAL / BIHAR development conference brought together more than 100 senior public officials, academics, and representatives from foundations, multilateral and bilateral agencies and NGOs to discuss the importance of impact evaluation for improving development programs and debate strategies for scaling up effective approaches for poverty reduction.

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### New Initiative Targets Farm Adoption Puzzle



*Why are poor farmers not adopting modern farming technologies?* With a \$4 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, a new collaborative research initiative between J-PAL and the Center of Evaluation for Global Action (CEGA) at Berkeley will use randomized evaluations to shed light on the technology adoption puzzle.

The first round of funding has been awarded to projects that will study contract farming in India and Kenya and schemes for promoting fertilizer usage in Kenya and less environmentally destructive agricultural practices in Bolivia.

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### Evidence for Global Action on MDGs

### NEW BOOKS IN FRENCH



Two new books by J-PAL co-director, Esther Duflo, offer practical insights to help design more effective development strategies based on evidence from randomized evaluations.

See *Le Monde* [BOOK REVIEW](#).

### J-PAL IN THE NEWS

J-PAL co-director Esther Duflo wins MacArthur 'Genius' award.

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**Hillary Rodham Clinton**, the US Secretary of State, highlights J-PAL's work to improve development in recent address.

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**Fast Company** on how J-PAL uses experimental research to explain human behavior, change how we help the poor and try to save the world.

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**The Economist** features J-PAL research on procrastination.

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**Deworm the World** reaches 20



With only five years to go before the 2015 deadline, progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been mixed. Important developments have been achieved in some areas, such as primary school enrollment and child mortality, but many countries remain off track.

In October, Professor Duflo was invited to brief the UN General Assembly at a special planning session for the 2010 MDG Summit. Her presentation highlighted seven promising interventions, or “best buys”, that could accelerate progress toward the MDGs.

From remedial education and deworming programs to improve learning and school attendance to quotas for women in politics and incentives for parents to immunize children, these interventions have been found to be highly cost-effective in at least one, and in most cases multiple contexts, and their effects are consistent with underlying patterns of individual and collective behavior found across a wider range of trials.

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### Executive Training

J-PAL is now accepting applications for the 2010 Executive Training Courses in randomized evaluations.

The locations and dates are:

**Cambridge**, USA, on May 24-28.

**Rabat**, Morocco, on June 7-11 (in French).

**Chennai**, India, on July 5-9.

**Bogota**, Colombia, on July 12-16 (in Spanish).

[LEARN MORE](#) about the J-PAL courses

million schoolchildren in 2009.

[READ MORE](#)

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#### NEW PAPERS

##### MICROFINANCE

[Money or Knowledge? What drives demand for financial services in emerging markets?](#)

By Shawn Cole, Thompas Sampson, and Bilal Zia.

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[Do Social Interactions Facilitate Cooperative Behavior? Evidence from a Group Lending Experiment in India?](#)

By Benjamin Feigenberg, Erica Field, Rohini Pande.

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##### METHODOLOGY

[Sample attrition bias in randomized experiments: A tale of two surveys.](#)

By Luc Behaghel, Bruno Crepon, Marc Gurgad, and Thomas Le Barbanchon.

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##### YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

[Programme d'accompagnement des jeunes chomeurs diplomes.](#)

By Bruno Crepon, Esther Duflo, Marc Gurgand, Roland Rathelot and Philippe Zamora.

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##### TARGETING

[How to Target the Poor: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia.](#)

By Ben Olken, Vivi Alatas, Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna and Julia Tobias.

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[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 achieve this objective by undertaking, promoting the use of, and disseminating the results of randomized evaluations of poverty programs.

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