CHECKLIST FOR PROOFING EACH SURVEY QUESTION
J-PAL RESEARCH RESOURCES

This checklist should be used before finalizing the questionnaire. For more information on each item, see the accompanying [Introduction to Measurement](#) *and* [Survey Design](#) *guides.*

QUESTIONS

- ☐ Does the question have an explicit rationale and a plan for how the recorded responses will be used?
- ☐ Does the question pass all tests of validity, reliability, and responsiveness? That is are we measuring the right thing, are we measuring it precisely and reliably, and will we be able to accurately detect change when it has occurred?
- ☐ Can respondents easily answer the question from memory?
- ☐ Is the question simple enough, specific enough, and sufficiently well-defined that all respondents will interpret it similarly?
    - ☐ Questions should be clear and concise, avoid jargon, provide definitions, and use vignettes to explain complex concepts
- ☐ Does the question focus on a single topic or does it contain multiple topics that should be broken up into multiple questions?
- ☐ Does the question contain any words or phrases that could bias respondents to answer one way over another? Does the question appear to "give away" what you'd like the response to be?
- ☐ Are any assumptions implied by a question warranted?
- ☐ Does the question directly observe indicators when possible? e.g., "can you do the following simple sum?" is a better question than "can you do simple sums?"

RESPONSES

- ☐ Is the unit of measurement specified?
- ☐ Are all listed response options mutually exclusive? Would it be appropriate to allow more than one answer or include a write-in "other" option?
- ☐ Are codes consistent across questions? Use consistent answer option coding (e.g., use Stata's extended missing values (.n, .d, etc.) if programming in SurveyCTO. 999 or -999 are both common choices for "Don't know" but won't drop out of analysis as missing values will)
- ☐ Be consistent in the way you ask interviewers to answer questions (e.g., don't mix 'circle the correct option' and 'tick the box next to the correct option)

INSTRUCTIONS TO SURVEYORS

- ☐ Have you included directions to the surveyor that tell them whether or not to read the options, if they should skip to a certain question based on the answer, etc.?
    - ☐ Are the instructions clearly differentiated from the question?
- ☐ Are instructions consistent across questions? E.g., Don't mix "circle the correct option" and "tick the box next to the correct option."

FINAL CHECK

- ☐ Do you really need this question? Most surveys are too long.