

Research in South Africa



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The J-PAL Africa research team conducts randomized evaluations on social programs and policies in South Africa. We have hubs in Cape Town and Johannesburg, and work in partnership with local and international researchers, government bodies and NGOs across South Africa. Our work covers a wide variety of topics and we have substantial experience conducting evaluations in the Labor sector.

Featured Studies



LABOR MARKETS

- [The role of reference letters and skill accreditation in the South African labour market](#)
- [The impact of a job search planning intervention on job search efficiency and employment among youth in South Africa](#)

- The impact of providing information about job seekers' skills on employment in South Africa
- Transport subsidies and job matchmaking in South Africa



ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

- The impact of prepaid electricity meters on low-income households in South Africa

How the J-PAL Africa research team works

The J-PAL Africa research team identifies policy-relevant questions, supports academics at the forefront of their fields in implementing randomized evaluations, and works with implementing partners to conduct evaluations and incorporate the results of our research studies. Research team members gain hands on experience conducting research studies from start to finish. This includes collecting, cleaning and analysing data and ensuring careful study designs are adhered to. To learn more about what it's like to work at J-PAL Africa, visit our ["Working at J-PAL Africa page"](#).

J-PAL AFRICA WORKS WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND RESEARCHERS IN THE J-PAL NETWORK TO IDENTIFY AND ANSWER KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS



1. Identify research ideas

J-PAL Africa's policy and research teams discuss potential research questions with prospective partners (programme implementers and policymakers), and academics, keeping in mind the feasibility of evaluating various interventions. In some cases, J-PAL Africa research and policy team members play a role in matching researchers with specific implementation partners or ongoing research studies.

2. Help to find a workable study design

J-PAL Africa research team members work with the partner and the researchers to think through various study design options. Using their expertise in implementing randomized evaluations, they help to find a design that will achieve the necessary study goals while working within the given context, partner's operational constraints, the budget available, and any other considerations.

3. Support delivery of the intervention

The research team support and/or monitor the delivery of interventions, and ensure that the integrity of the randomisation design is maintained during implementation, and that all relevant implementation information is carefully recorded.

4. Collect data

The J-PAL Africa research team recruits and trains field teams to conduct high quality surveys, and oversee all data collection. Research team members produce and test survey instruments, contribute to implementation design, manage project data, and conduct process monitoring, high frequency checks and back-checks, ensuring high quality data sets.

5. Analyse the data

J-PAL Africa's research team, with the support of academics, perform data cleaning, and assist in analysis and visualisation tasks, using tools like Stata, R, and Python 3.

6. Produce and share results

Research team members work to share results with relevant

partners, support those partners in incorporating the research findings into their work and collaborate with the J-PAL Africa policy team to package and disseminate results with a broader audience.

Partnerships

The J-PAL Africa research team works closely with partners who implement the social programs being evaluated, ensuring that research questions are policy-relevant, and that the results are shared with partners to help inform their policy. For example, we have worked with the City of Cape Town, Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, and South Africa's Department of Labour.

Contact: For more information about J-PAL research in Africa, please contact [Brendan Maughan-Brown](#).

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