

ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL  
Poverty Action Lab



TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO ACTION



# ATAI PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

9 - 10 May 2013



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# DAY ONE

8:30am – 9:00am	<b>Light Breakfast</b>
9:00am – 9:15am	<b>Welcome and Conference Overview</b> Craig McIntosh
9:15am – 10:45am	<b>BREAKOUT SESSION</b> Craig McIntosh, Rachel Glennerster  A: Principles of Impact Evaluation and Randomized Trials (Practitioners) B: Overview of Participating Organization Priorities (Researchers)
10:45am – 11:00am	<b>Coffee Break</b>
11:00am – 12:00pm	<b>ATAI Evidence and Research Priorities</b> Rachel Glennerster
12:00pm – 1:00pm	<b>Lunch</b>

# AGENDA

# DAY ONE

1:00pm – 2:00pm	<b>Researcher and Practitioner Presentations</b>
2:00pm – 3:00pm	<b>Short Implementing Partner Presentations</b> 10 organizations, 5 minutes each
3:00pm – 3:15pm	<b>Coffee Break</b>
3:15pm – 4:15pm	<b>Short Implementing Partner Presentations</b> 10 organizations, 5 minutes each
4:15pm – 5:30pm	<b>Breakout Session 1</b> Researchers and Implementing Partners paired by previously stated interests and meeting requests
5:30pm – 5:45pm	<b>Day One Closing Remarks and Sign Up for Breakout Session 2</b>
6:30pm – 9:00pm	<b>Conference Dinner</b>

# DAY TWO

8:30am – 9:00am	<b>Light Breakfast</b>
9:00am – 10:30am	<b>Short Researcher Presentations</b> 15 researchers, 5 minutes each
10:30am – 11:00am	<b>Coffee Break</b>
11:00am – 12:30pm	<b>Breakout Session 2</b> Researchers and Implementing Partners paired by <i>researcher requests</i>
12:30pm – 1:30pm	<b>Lunch</b> Partner sign-up for Breakout Session 3
1:30pm – 2:45pm	<b>Breakout Session 3</b> Researchers and Implementing Partners paired by <i>implementing partner requests</i>
2:45pm – 4:00pm	<b>Researcher and Implementing Partner Group Work</b> With coffee
4:00pm – 5:30pm	<b>Preliminary Ideas: Joint Researcher-Practitioner Presentations</b> 8 presentations, 10 minutes each
5:30pm	<b>Concluding Remarks</b> Craig McIntosh

# AGENDA



# WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to the 2013 Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (ATAI) Partnership Development Conference at the University of California, Berkeley, co-sponsored by the Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) and the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL).

Over the next two days, we hope to provide a productive space for researchers and practitioners to come together and establish new partnerships that explore questions critical to the welfare of smallholder farmers throughout Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Our program provides examples of how partnerships between researchers and practitioners may work, and ample opportunities for the two groups to lay the groundwork for innovative new research.

Since its launch in 2009, ATAI's has awarded over \$5 million to fund 24 unique research projects in 12 countries that explore such diverse questions as how to focus remittance payments to improve agriculture, how to strategically use social networks to change planting behavior, how agricultural insurance may affect farming practices, and how mobile technology may be an effective way to deliver information to farmers and pastoralists.



This conference is the product of a months-long portfolio analysis, in which researchers assessed areas in which critical research gaps remain. Research focusing on accessing credit, using risk markets, and provision of information are well represented in our portfolio. While ATAI will continue to fund open questions in these areas, this process, which included an academic retreat in February, has helped surface four research priority areas for ATAI. These include:

- The use of behavioral economics and marketing to increase adoption of technologies with “hidden” traits, in which the technologies’ benefits are not always or immediately visible to the producer or consumer;
- Projects that address the institutional and market barriers for smallholder farmers to enter and sustain themselves in equitable value chains;
- Research that effectively measures the impact on labor markets of technology adoption; and
- Studies that investigate various environmental impacts of technology adoption, and ways in which to promote environmentally-forward technologies.

We hope that the next two days are useful to you in exploring the potential to incorporate this research into your organization if you are a practitioner, and if you are a researcher, that you may find an organization with which you may initiate exciting new research. We look forward to a productive two days, in which the outcomes lead to research and programs that improve the lives of farmers across the developing world.

Best Regards,



Rachel Glennerster (J-PAL), Craig McIntosh (CEGA and J-PAL), and Chris Udry (J-PAL)

# ABOUT ATAI

The Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (ATAI) is a collaborative program between researchers at MIT's Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) and UC Berkeley's Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA). Supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID), and an anonymous donor, ATAI's mission is to develop and rigorously test programs that improve adoption and profitable use of agricultural technology by small-scale farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.



As many of the poorest people in the world are smallholder farmers, agricultural productivity is inextricably linked to poverty alleviation. In order to maximize gains from investments in new technologies, we need to understand why appropriate technologies are not adopted, and determine how to design the most cost-effective ways to ensure that new technological advances translate into improved lives for the poorest.

Through semi-annual grantmaking competitions, ATAI funds randomized impact evaluations that seek to identify and overcome constraints that keep low-income farmers from adopting profitable agricultural technologies, and that measure the welfare impact of technology adoption on individuals, households, and communities.

ATAI's conceptual framework defines seven constraints to adoption of profitable technologies by smallholder farmers. In a well-functioning economy where markets perfectly capture all costs and benefits, and individuals are fully informed and unconstrained, farmers will adopt a technology if they make a profit from adopting it. Of course, most economies of the world are very far from the well-functioning ideal. Movement away from this ideal creates constraints on the adoption of even profitable technologies. ATAI's research focuses on improving the ability of low-income farmers to benefit from agricultural technology by seeking ways around these constraints. Successful approaches require attention to the

market imperfections and other constraints that characterize the contexts in which adoption decisions are made. ATAI has identified seven market inefficiencies that lower expected profits from agricultural technology adoption:

1. **EXTERNALITIES.** Some technologies create spillovers that affect others. If farmer decisions ignore these spillovers then technologies that create benefits for others may not be adopted, while technologies that impose costs on others may be adopted too widely.

2. **INPUT AND OUTPUT MARKET INEFFICIENCIES.** Problems with infrastructure and with supply chains, compounded by weak contracting environments, make it more costly for farmers to access input and output markets and access the benefits from technology adoption.

3. **LAND MARKET INEFFICIENCIES.** In settings where land tenure is weak and property rights insecure, farmers may not have an incentive to invest in beneficial technologies.

4. **LABOR MARKET INEFFICIENCIES.** New technologies need different types and timing of labor input. Restrictions on labor mobility and high costs in the labor market will interfere with adoption opportunities.

5. **CREDIT MARKET INEFFICIENCIES.** Many farmers have difficulty accessing credit and face high interest rates, which prevents investment in profitable technologies. Financial decisions may be difficult for farmers without high levels of financial literacy.



6. **RISK MARKET INEFFICIENCIES.** Technologies that carry a small risk of a loss may not be worth large expected gains if risks cannot be offset. Psychological issues around risky decisions further lower levels of adoption.

7. **INFORMATIONAL INEFFICIENCIES.** If an individual does not know that a technology exists, does not know about its benefits, or does not know how to use it effectively, then the technology will not be adopted.

The long-term objective of ATAI is to ensure that the poor derive greater benefit from existing and new technologies. ATAI will achieve this objective by generating rigorous evidence from randomized impact evaluations on problems faced by implementing organizations in order to identify the most cost-effective ways of promoting take-up of these technologies.

# ABOUT THE 2013 ATAI PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

ATAI provides research funding to J-PAL and CEGA affiliates as well as to select other ATAI network researchers through semi-annual Requests for Proposals (RFP) to conduct randomized impact evaluations of innovative programs that have potential to improve agricultural technology adoption among and human welfare of smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Funded projects reflect partnerships between researchers and program and project implementing organizations in the public, non-profit, and private sectors.

The 2013 ATAI Partnership Development Conference is designed to forge such collaborations between researchers and implementation agencies to undertake new research. The conference includes presentations by academics and sector experts on important open questions related to agricultural technology adoption, as well as a series of iterative breakout sessions in which researchers and practitioners who share similar regional and/or thematic interests can discuss and map out opportunities for collaboration. By process of the breakout sessions, organizations will receive structured guidance from academic experts on how to build randomized evaluations into the design and execution of their specific programs.

This conference follows an academic retreat hosted by ATAI in Cambridge, MA in February 2013, which brought together

researchers to discuss open questions in developing country agriculture. Through this matchmaking conference, ATAI hopes to generate new partnerships that can result in impact evaluation proposals related to some of ATAI's current research priorities, which include behavioral marketing, value chains, labor markets, green technologies, and environmental impacts of technology adoption.

Research funding comes in three categories:

**ADOPTION PILOT STUDIES:** Pilot funding supports projects in their infancy, in which researchers and practitioners define research questions and logistics for full-scale research projects.

**ADOPTION FULL RESEARCH STUDIES:** Full research projects on adoption that use randomized interventions designed to increase the uptake of a technology, testing the existence of market inefficiencies.

**IMPACT FULL RESEARCH STUDIES:** Full research projects that build on studies which demonstrate sufficient adoption to evaluate the welfare impact of a technology on individuals, households, and communities, including crop yields, income and consumption, health and nutrition, and agricultural and educational investments.



# ABOUT CEGA



The Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) is the University of California's premier center for research on global development, with a network of forty faculty extending to Stanford and the University of Washington. CEGA's affiliates use randomized controlled trials and other, quasi-experimental methods to measure the impacts of large-scale social and economic development programs. CEGA is truly inter-disciplinary, integrating business and economic approaches with expertise in agriculture, public health, engineering, education, and the environment.

## INNOVATION

To effectively tackle poverty, donors and governments need to know which policies improve economic and social welfare. CEGA works with global funding agencies to develop research challenge initiatives designed to draw researchers into neglected areas of study, thus generating evidence to guide NGOs and governments in creating more effective policy.

## COLLABORATION

CEGA is committed to empowering researchers in developing countries and building the capacity of local institutions to undertake rigorous evaluations. CEGA's portfolio of leadership and training programs is conceived and established in partnership with developing country universities and global implementation partners.

## IMPACT

To effect social change, evidence must be transformed into better policies and programs. Toward this end, CEGA maintains strong relationships with public and private sector allies committed to evidence-driven development, and incentivizes the scale-up of proven interventions through targeted outreach to NGOs, governments, and foundations.



# ABOUT J-PAL

The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) was established in 2003 as a research center at the Economics Department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Since then, it has grown into a global network of over seventy researchers who use randomized evaluations to answer critical policy questions in the fight against poverty. J-PAL's mission is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is based on scientific evidence and research is translated into action. We do this through three main activities:

## CONDUCTING RIGOROUS IMPACT EVALUATIONS

J-PAL researchers conduct randomized evaluations to test and improve the effectiveness of programs and policies aimed at reducing poverty. Our work spans several program areas: agriculture, education, environment and energy, finance, health, governance, and youth and labor markets.

## POLICY OUTREACH

J-PAL's policy group analyzes and disseminates research results, and builds partnerships with policymakers to ensure policy is driven by evidence and effective programs are scaled up.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

J-PAL equips practitioners with the expertise to carry out their own rigorous evaluations through training courses and joint research projects.

In addition to our global office at MIT, Cambridge, J-PAL has regional centers in **AFRICA** at the University of Cape Town (Cape Town, South Africa); **SOUTH ASIA** at the Institute for Financial Management Research (Chennai, India); **EUROPE** at the Paris School of Economics (Paris, France); **LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN** at Pontificia Universidad Católica (Santiago, Chile); and **SOUTHEAST ASIA** at University of Indonesia (Jakarta, Indonesia). J-PAL's regional offices coordinate evaluations of development programs and actively work in capacity building and policy outreach.



# WHY RANDOMIZE?

It is not always obvious which policy will have the largest impact on intended beneficiaries: What is the best way to increase school participation--incentives for parents, information on returns to schooling, or school inputs? Do quotas for women in politics reduce (or increase) biases against women politicians? What is the most cost-effective way of improving learning in schools?

To design good policy, we need to know how well a policy is working and whether it is a good value for the money: Random assignment offers a simple way to generate these insights. In randomized evaluations, individuals are selected to receive a program based on a lottery. Those individuals who are not selected form a comparison group. Because the selection process is random, the two groups are similar in every respect, except that one group receives the program, while the other does not.

Therefore if, after the program is implemented, the group that received the program has different outcomes (e.g. more or less healthy, or higher or lower test scores), we know that this difference was caused by the program. This clear attribution of what effects were caused by the program gives us insights about its effectiveness.

Randomized evaluations are particularly appropriate when programs are oversubscribed, scheduled to be rolled out in a gradual fashion, or are initially tested with pilot programs. In those cases, randomization is one of the fairest ways of determining participation, while simultaneously allowing for rigorous measurement of the effect.



# SAMPLE ATAI

## RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS

### 1 BARRIERS TO FERTILIZER USE: EVIDENCE FROM A FIELD EXPERIMENT IN KENYA

*Can time-limited coupons for fertilizers, redeemable immediately after the harvest, help farmers overcome savings constraints and increase fertilizer use? Can farmer cooperatives accelerate the diffusion of innovation and knowledge between farmers?*

**Researchers:** Esther Duflo, Mahnaz Islam, Michael Kremer, Jonathan Robinson, Frank Schilbach

**Partners:** Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

**Location:** Western Province, Kenya

**Sample:** 20,000 subsistence farmers in rural Kenya with primary school-aged children

**Timeline:** June, 2010 - October, 2015

**Constraints on Adoption:** Credit Market Inefficiencies, Informational Inefficiencies, Input and Output Market Inefficiencies

#### POLICY ISSUE

Agricultural outputs in Africa have stagnated over the past decades: although total output has risen, food production has not kept up with the increase in Africa's population. The number of chronically undernourished people in Africa has increased to 200 million in 1997-99.<sup>1</sup> When is not

used correctly, chemical fertilizer can substantially raise agricultural yields, yet usage of fertilizer remains low in Sub-Saharan Africa. Past studies suggest that usage is low because farmers have difficulty saving harvest income to purchase fertilizer for the next growing season, have limited information on the benefits of using fertilizer properly, and the fact that knowledge about fertilizer passed from one farmer to another. This project attempts to address all three issues.



## DETAILS OF THE INTERVENTION

This experiment looks at a complex intervention with several components meant to increase fertilizer use and dissemination of knowledge. Farmers were recruited to the study through meetings at primary schools and randomly divided into four groups.

1. The first group received small, time-limited discounts which were valid within a 3 week window right after harvest, redeemable at a local shop. Farmers received coupons for a discount of about 15% of the price of fertilizer, for up to 25 kilograms.
2. The second group was encouraged to form farmers' cooperative with their friends and neighbors to talk about fertilizer and agricultural practices. The researchers organized the groups and coordinated the first few meetings, but did not provide any direct information to the groups.
3. The third group participated in both the coupon scheme and the cooperatives.
4. A fourth group received none of these services, and served as a comparison.

Researchers will examine the changes in fertilizer usage between the different groups and whether farmers in the treatment groups talk to each other about agriculture more than others.

A separate intervention was designed to investigate the spread of information and technology when provided only to a subset of farmers in the treatment and comparison groups. The research team visited the randomly selected farmers and provided them with 1/2 teaspoon measuring spoons, as well as information about the returns to using 1/2 teaspoon of fertilizer per plant. To enable diffusion of this technology to others in the community, the spoons were made available in nearby fertilizer shops to other farmers for a nominal fee. In addition, when distributing the measuring spoons, the farmers were given vouchers for spoons which they could give to their friends. This intervention will test the hypothesis that the fertilizer discount intervention and the cooperative intervention could lead to greater diffusion of information about fertilizer.

# SAMPLE ATAI

## RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS

### 2 PROMOTING ADOPTION OF NEW RICE VARIETIES: ADDRESSING THE COSTS OF EARLY ADOPTION IN SIERRA LEONE

*Can improved seed varieties benefit poor farmers in Sierra Leone? Can price subsidies and agricultural extension training lessen the costs of early adoption?*

**Researchers:** Jeannie Annan, Charles Dixon, Rachel Glennerster, Frances Kimmins, Tavneet Suri

**Partners:** Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI)

**Location:** Various communities, Sierra Leone

**Sample:** 245 communities

**Timeline:** February, 2011 -

**Constraints on Adoption:** Externalities, Informational Inefficiencies, Risk Market Inefficiencies

#### POLICY ISSUE

Agricultural productivity has stagnated in much of sub-Saharan Africa, while many other regions of the world have seen dramatic productivity improvements in recent decades. New agricultural technologies, such as high-yielding crop varieties, offer the promise of improving productivity and hence the welfare of farmers. But adoption of these technologies has

often been low in countries where dissemination programs have been conducted. First adopters of new technologies play an important role in the spread of technology as they take on the burden of experimentation—testing whether and how a new variety works in local conditions. This is particularly important in much of sub-Saharan Africa where a multiplicity of micro climates within a small area means that experimentation is essential for farmers to learn which crop varieties are best for their particular land. There is also concern that early subsidization to increase adoption of new technologies will lead to expectation of continued subsidies, depressing demand at market prices.

#### DETAILS OF THE INTERVENTION

TResearchers sought to test whether improved seeds are beneficial for the poor in Sierra Leone and how best to promote uptake given the high costs of early adoption. Early adopters generate positive externalities to surrounding farmers and communities by delivering information on the effectiveness of new varieties and how to make the most of them in local conditions.

In 2011, a random sample of 5 farmers in each of 36 communities received half a bushel of NERICA-3, a short-duration variety of rice with the potential for high yields. These farmers also received regular visits from agricultural extension workers who provided practical advice on how to cultivate these seeds.

In 2012, researchers will test a more complex set of incentives that includes: (1) a price subsidy scheme allowing farmers to purchase new seeds at lower than market price, and (2) provision of targeted agricultural extension work involving community demonstration plots. The second year of the intervention will include four treatment arms, each with approximately 40 communities under three different schemes:

### **PRICING SCHEME**

T1: Farming households offered NERICA-3 variety at 0 percent subsidy (market price)

T2: Farming household offered NERICA-3 variety at 50 percent subsidy.

T3: Farming households offered NERICA-3 variety at 100 percent subsidy (free)

### **ROK-16 SCHEME**

T4: Farmers are offered ROK-16 at 100 percent subsidy (free)

### **TRAINING SCHEME**

Each of these four treatment groups are cross-cut so that half of the communities in each treatment group will receive a targeted training program intended to assist the farmer in adapting to the cultivation techniques specific to the new variety of rice they acquired.

The pricing scheme aims to test the hypothesis that a one-time subsidy can reduce the adoption cost for early-adopters and have a long-lasting effect on both the beneficiary and their neighbors. The training scheme aims to reduce the cost of learning by providing information on how well the seed works in the community (through a demonstration plot) and on how to cope with some of the features specific to the new variety of rice.

In 2013, ten farmers from the 160 treatment communities as well as ten farmers from an additional 40 control communities will be offered the chance to purchase NERICA-3 at full market price without targeted access to extension work. Key outcome variable to be measured at the endline include: (1) the amount of improved rice variety seeds (NERICA-3 and ROK-16) purchased and planted; (2) the impact of subsidies and training on purchasing decisions in subsequent years; (3) planting of other rice varieties and other crops; (4) yields, consumption, and food security.



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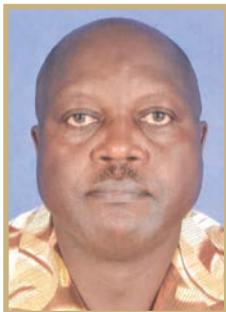
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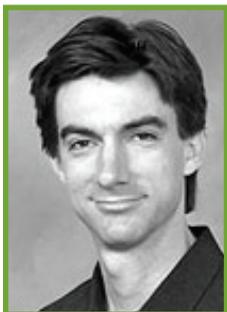
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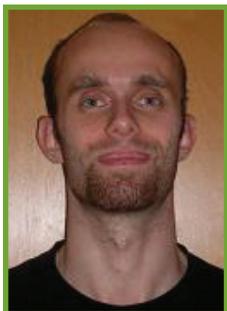
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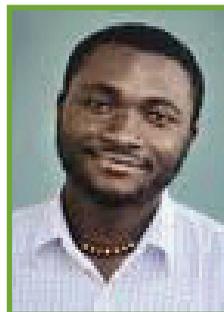
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