

# January 2018 Newsletter

January 11, 2018



## Celebrating ten years of rigorous research and policy impact in South Asia

Last month, J-PAL South Asia hosted a series of events across India in recognition of ten years of rigorous, challenging, and rewarding work promoting evidence-informed policymaking in the region. Growing from just a few research assistants in Delhi and a lean support team in Chennai in 2007 to more than 175 staff across nine field offices today, the J-PAL South Asia team is filling critical evidence gaps and building the capacity of governments and civil society organizations to create positive social change. [Read more »](#)

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## J-PAL welcomes new executive director

[Iqbal Dhaliwal](#) is the new executive director of J-PAL, succeeding Rachel Glennerster, who has joined DFID as its chief economist. Earlier Iqbal was deputy executive director, and prior to that, founding director of J-PAL's policy group. Before joining the organization in 2009 he was a director in an economics consulting firm and an official in India's senior civil service, where he worked on policy formulation and program implementation. [Read our Q&A »](#)

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## Meet new J-PAL affiliates

Eight researchers recently joined J-PAL's network: [Peter Bergman](#) and [Eric Verhoogen](#) at Columbia University, [Saurabh Bhargava](#) at Carnegie Mellon University, [Clément de Chaisemartin](#) at University of California, Santa Barbara, [Will Dobbie](#) at Princeton University, [William Evans](#) at University of Notre Dame, [Nathaniel Hendren](#) at Harvard University, and [Wes Yin](#) at University of California, Los Angeles. Their varied research interests range from children's language acquisition to racial bias in criminal justice systems and technology adoption in soccer ball factories. [Meet the new affiliates »](#)

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## FEATURED EVALUATIONS

### Can cash and behavioral nudges in Kenya improve maternity care?

Each year, 1.3 million mothers and newborns in sub-Saharan Africa die from complications related to childbirth. J-PAL affiliated researchers [Jessica Cohen](#) and [Margaret McConnell](#) at Harvard University, along with Ginger Golub, Margaret Kruk, Katherine Lofgren, George Omondi, and Claire Rothschild, evaluated whether cash transfers and decision-making nudges could address potential behavioral and structural barriers to timely arrival at high-quality health facilities. Cash transfers, conditional on a pre-commitment to a delivery facility of the woman's choice, led to earlier and more effective birth planning and increased the likelihood that women delivered at higher-quality facilities. [Read more »](#)

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## FEATURED MULTIMEDIA

### Pascaline Dupas on improving health at scale

In a recent Data, Decisions, Public Policy (D<sup>2</sup>P<sup>2</sup>) talk, [Pascaline Dupas](#) (Stanford University; co-chair, J-PAL's Health sector) discussed the latest evidence on the most effective and cost-effective ways to improve health at scale, from providing access to credit and savings tools to making preventive health products easier to access and take up. [Watch the video »](#)

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### New TEDx talk: It improved lives elsewhere. Will it here?

How can we begin to assess whether a program that worked in one place will work in another? [Mary Ann Bates](#), executive director of J-PAL North America, spoke at a recent TEDx event. When we focus less on place and more on people's behavior, we can learn lessons about how to fight poverty from India and Kenya to Chicago and Boston. [Watch the video »](#)

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## ONLINE COURSES

### Register now for the next MicroMasters semester

The next semester of our online MicroMasters in Data, Economics, and Development Policy begins February 6. Course offerings include Microeconomics, The Challenges of Global Poverty, Data Analysis for Social Scientists, Foundations of Development Policy, and Designing and Running Randomized Evaluations. [Register now »](#)

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## MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

[Worldwide change takes global effort](#)

MIT News

[Meet DFID's new head economist](#)

Devex

[Using evidence for public policy gains traction in India](#)

Hindustan Times

[What does women's labor force participation really tell us about women's empowerment?](#)

J-PAL Blog

[Working together to teach at the right level \[Opinion\]](#)

LiveMint

[Nudge the mind out of its bias](#)

The Hindu

[J-PAL North America calls for proposals from governments and health care organizations](#)

MIT News

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## **FEATURED JOBS**

Our annual recruitment drive closes Friday, January 12.

Executive Director, J-PAL Latin America & Caribbean (Santiago, Chile)

Training Manager, J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA, US)

Research Manager, J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA, US)

[Explore open positions around the world »](#)

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## **PLEASE SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK**

Take a short anonymous survey to help the J-PAL newsletter team assess how the newsletter can better serve your interests. The survey should take no more than five minutes to complete.