

August 2018 Newsletter

August 8, 2018



Applying lessons from the MicroMasters in Botswana

Seven staff members of the NGO Young 1ove in Botswana enrolled in The Challenges of Global Poverty, one of five courses offered as part of the J-PAL/MIT MicroMasters in Data, Economics, and Development Policy. Guest authors Hannah Blair and Efua Bortsie of Young 1ove write on the J-PAL blog, “The experience was not without its challenges. We navigated low-quality Wi-Fi, international travel, and tight schedules. But the skills we gained are already incredibly useful.” [Read more »](#)

The next semester of the online MicroMasters begins September 11. [Enroll now »](#)

Meet our newest J-PAL affiliates

Seven researchers recently joined J-PAL’s academic network: [Sule Alan](#) at the University of Essex, [Sarah Cohodes](#) at Columbia University, [Marcel Fafchamps](#) at Stanford University, [William Jack](#) at Georgetown University, [Kirabo Jackson](#) at Northwestern University, [Christopher Knittel](#) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and [Christopher Woodruff](#) at the University of Oxford.

Their varied research interests span numerous topics, including enterprise growth in low-income countries, household financial decision-making, parents' and students' education choices, teacher labor markets, entrepreneurship, digital financial inclusion, and energy efficiency investments. [Read more »](#)

Why aren't older adults enrolling in SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—often referred to as food stamps—is one of the largest social safety net programs in the United States. But every year thousands of households eligible for SNAP benefits do not enroll, missing out on food assistance that could be critical. [Amy Finkelstein](#) (MIT, Co-Scientific Director of J-PAL North America) and [Matthew Notowidigdo](#) (Northwestern University) partnered with Benefits Data Trust, a national nonprofit, to conduct a [randomized evaluation](#) to test different strategies for reducing barriers to SNAP enrollment.

They found that for some people, providing information about eligibility is enough to get them to enroll. But for many others, more intensive assistance is required to substantially increase enrollment. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED POLICY INSIGHT

Reducing the cost of lending to low-income borrowers

Microcredit has made huge strides in the past several decades in lowering the cost and expanding access to credit to millions of borrowers. But interest rates remain high as banks pass along costs of reaching smaller, riskier, or more remote clients. Several innovations can help reduce these costs, including market-wide efforts to generate better information about prospective borrowers, product design modifications that incentivize or enforce repayment, and digital lending. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED MULTIMEDIA

Measuring Women's and Girls' Empowerment: A practical guide and conversation

On July 25, the Center for Global Development (CGD) hosted the launch of our new [Practical Guide to Measuring Women's and Girls' Empowerment in Impact Evaluations](#). At the event, Mayra Buvinic (Senior Fellow at CGD and Data2X), Rachel Glennerster (Chief Economist at the UK Department for International Development), Joao Montalvao (Economist at the Africa Gender Innovation Lab at the World Bank), and Kate Scaife Diaz (Director of Impact at TechnoServe) discussed the proposed measurement approaches, possible ways to overcome challenges related to measuring empowerment, and important areas for future research. [Watch the conversation](#) and [read CGD's related blog post »](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

[How to find out if “women’s empowerment” programs really empower women](#)
NPR

[A Guide to Gender Equality in the Workplace](#)

How postcards solved the problem of disappearing rice

NPR

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

[Can iron-fortified salt control anemia? Evidence from two experiments in rural Bihar](#)

Abhijit Banerjee, Sharon Barnhardt, Esther Duflo

[Incentivizing safer sexual behaviour: Evidence from a lottery experiment on HIV prevention](#)

Martina Björkman Nyqvist, Lucia Corno, Damien de Walque, Jakob Svensson

[The neighborhood impacts of local infrastructure investment: Evidence from urban Mexico](#)

Craig McIntosh, Tito Alegría, Gerardo Ordóñez, René Zenteno

[The persistent power of behavioral change: Long-run impacts of temporary savings subsidies for the poor](#)

Simone Schaner

FEATURED JOBS

Research, Education, and Training Associate, J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA, US)

Senior Associate in Research, Education, and Training, J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA, US)

Manager in Research, Education, and Training, J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA, US)

Senior Manager in Research, Education, and Training, J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA, US)

Policy Manager, Finance, J-PAL South Asia (New Delhi, India)

Policy Manager, Gender, J-PAL South Asia (New Delhi, India)

Policy Manager, Governance, J-PAL South Asia (New Delhi, India)

Training Associate, J-PAL Southeast Asia (Jakarta, Indonesia)

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