

January 2019 Newsletter

January 10, 2019



2018 in review: A letter from our Executive Director, Iqbal Dhaliwal

I am often asked during the year “how are things at J-PAL?” My frank reply usually is “busy, but good busy!” As the new year begins, I’d like to share a few things that made 2018 “good busy” for J-PAL, and a few more things we’re excited about in 2019. Throughout it all, our vision remains the same: greater use of data and rigorous evidence in decision-making.

[Read more »](#)

Highlighting education partnerships with governments in Latin America

In December 2018, J-PAL Latin America & the Caribbean partnered with the Dominican Institute for Educational Quality Research and Evaluation to host a conference that highlighted successful education partnerships between governments and researchers across Latin America.

Examples included the evaluation and scale-up of information dissemination policies in the [Dominican Republic](#) and [Peru](#), and the strengthening of government data centers and impact evaluation labs, including Peru’s [MineduLAB](#). [Read more »](#)

AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHT

Rohini Pande on furthering the status of women in economics

In our Q&A with [Rohini Pande](#) (Harvard; Faculty Co-Director, Evidence for Policy Design; Co-Chair, J-PAL's Political Economy & Governance sector), she reflects on being named the 2018 recipient of the Carolyn Shaw Bell Award—a prize awarded annually to an individual who has furthered the status of women in economics. In the interview, she discusses strategies for de-biasing institutions and offers advice to early career female researchers. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED EVIDENCE TO POLICY CASE STUDY

Simplified reminders to increase take-up of tax credits

Each year, more than 20 percent of individuals and families in the United States eligible for the earned income tax credit (EITC) fail to claim this benefit. J-PAL affiliates [Saurabh Bhargava](#) (Carnegie Mellon) and [Dayanand Manoli](#) (University of Texas, Austin) partnered with the IRS to [evaluate](#) different approaches to improving EITC take-up.

They found that repeated mailings with simple, highly relevant information improved taxpayers' likelihood of claiming benefits. Based on these results, the IRS redesigned the reminder notification letters to more simply and prominently communicate potential benefit amounts. [Read more »](#)

UPCOMING COURSES

Register for the next MicroMasters semester

The next semester of our online MicroMasters in Data, Economics, and Development Policy (DEDP) begins February 5. 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 »](#)

Students who complete the full DEDP credential are eligible to apply for the new blended Master's in DEDP at MIT. [Learn more »](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Accepting letters of interest: State and Local Innovation Initiative

The [State and Local Innovation Initiative](#) supports US leaders in using randomized evaluations to generate evidence on what works to reduce poverty. Since the initiative's launch in 2015, J-PAL North America and affiliated researchers have [partnered with twelve state and local governments](#) to evaluate topics ranging from summer jobs programs to supportive housing.

State and local governments in the US interested in using rigorous impact evaluations to answer policy questions are encouraged to submit letters of interest by April 1, 2019. To learn more, read the [application](#) [document](#) and [contact information](#) at [https://www.jpal.org/2018/11/09/SLII](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

[Tailoring the charter school population](#)

US News & World Report

[It's hard to design good policies. This simple idea can help governments do it](#)

Vox

[Scaling up good ideas is really, really hard – and we're starting to figure out why](#)

Vox

[Use mobiles to improve governance](#)

Hindustan Times

[How do we achieve affordable, quality health care? Follow the evidence.](#)

J-PAL Blog

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

[Coordinating voters against criminal politicians: Evidence from a mobile experiment in India](#)

Siddharth George, Sarika Gupta, Yusuf Neggers

[Improving last-mile service delivery using phone-based monitoring](#)

Karthik Muralidharan, Paul Niehaus, Sandip Sukhtankar, Jeffrey Weaver

FEATURED JOBS

J-PAL's annual [recruitment drive](#) is open until January 11. We are hiring for more than 100 positions at all levels in research, policy, training, and more. Open positions include:

[Deputy Director](#), J-PAL Africa (Cape Town, South Africa)

[Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, ID, Payments, and Governance](#), J-PAL Africa (Cape Town, South Africa)

[TaRL Education Manager](#), J-PAL Africa/VVOB (Lusaka, Zambia)

[TaRL Country Director, Cote d'Ivoire](#), J-PAL Europe (Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire)

[TaRL Finance and Operations Manager](#), J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA)

[Manager, IDEA](#), J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA)

[Senior Manager, IDEA](#), J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA)

[Research and Training Associate](#), J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA)

[Senior Research and Training Associate](#), J-PAL Global (Cambridge, MA)

[Policy Manager](#), J-PAL South Asia (New Delhi, India)

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