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NEWSLETTER
September 2020



The first cohort of DEDP master's students stand with J-PAL and DEDP faculty directors Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Benjamin Olken in early 2020 at MIT. Photo: Nouf Abushehab

Celebrating the graduates of the Data, Economics, and Development Policy (DEDP) master's program

Congratulations to the inaugural cohort of students in the [DEDP program](#)! In January 2020, we welcomed 22 students from sixteen countries to MIT's campus to begin the program, though soon after, they returned home to virtual learning due to COVID-19. After eight months of hard work, the students have graduated and are continuing to research and implement evidence-informed policies around the world. [Read more »](#)



Photo: Stephanie M. Grueso (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Responding to climate change in Europe: The role of rigorous evaluation

As part of the European Green Deal, Europe has set the ambitious target of becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. With the recent launch of J-PAL's [King Climate Action Initiative](#), J-PAL Europe is committed to supporting European decision-makers' response to climate change by collaborating with researchers to generate rigorous evidence that can inform the design of innovative policies and technologies. [Read more »](#)

INFORMING RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS



Foundational learning first: A joint statement

More than one billion students have been out of school due to COVID-19, exacerbating a pre-pandemic learning crisis where millions of students were in school but not learning. J-PAL, along with partners the Douglas B. Marshall Jr. Family Foundation, Innovations for Poverty Action, Pratham, Teaching at the Right Level Africa, and Young Love, recently released a [joint statement](#) on the importance of foundational learning for children in primary school during and after the pandemic. [Read more »](#)

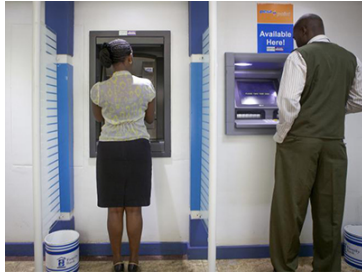
Addressing educational inequalities in the United States

COVID-19 threatens to worsen stark opportunity gaps that persist throughout the US education system. On our blog, J-PAL North America outlines how research can support students, teachers, and parents adapt education practices and policies to respond to and recover from the pandemic. [Read more »](#)

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on agricultural pastoralists in Kenya

Congregating in markets poses a health risk to both buyers and sellers, threatening the livelihoods of livestock pastoralists in Kenya. With funding from the Center for Effective Global Action and J-PAL's [Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative](#), researchers are collaborating with the International Livestock Research Institute to assess the effects of the pandemic on this vulnerable population. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED INSIGHT



Reducing the costs of saving

High costs associated with formal bank accounts are often cited as a key obstacle for low-income households to save in formal financial institutions. However, a review of fourteen randomized evaluations found that lowering the cost of opening and using a savings account does not consistently increase savings. Given that savings is associated with positive welfare impacts, reducing other barriers to saving should be a priority for financial institutions. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY

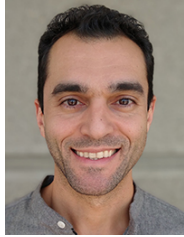


Deworming in Kenya: Long-term impacts

In 2004, J-PAL affiliated professors [Edward Miguel](#) (UC Berkeley) and [Michael Kremer](#) (University of Chicago), along with their coauthors, found that a mass school-based deworming program in western Kenya led to large gains in school attendance and health outcomes. Over two decades later, they found that deworming continues to deliver economic benefits to those who received additional years of treatment as children. In [Vox](#), the authors dig into these results and discuss how they contribute to the broader conversation on deworming. [Read the summary »](#)

WELCOMING OUR NEW AFFILIATED PROFESSORS

This summer, 34 new affiliated professors joined the J-PAL network. We'll feature a few of these new affiliates each month.



Rachid Laajaj
Universidad de Los Andes



Alicia Sasser Modestino
Northeastern University



Heather Schofield
University of Pennsylvania

UPCOMING AND FEATURED WEBINARS

September 22: Social Protection in the COVID-19 Era

Rema Hanna (Harvard; Scientific Director, J-PAL Southeast Asia), Benjamin A. Olken (MIT; Director, J-PAL; Scientific Director, J-PAL Southeast Asia), and Suahasil Nazara (Deputy Minister of Finance of Indonesia) will discuss evidence-informed insights to strengthen social safety nets in Indonesia during COVID-19. [Register now »](#)

September 23: Celebrating the 2019 Nobel Laureates in Economic Sciences

Co-hosted with the Center for International Development at Harvard University, Abhijit Banerjee (MIT; Director, J-PAL), Esther Duflo (MIT; Director, J-PAL; Scientific Director, J-PAL South Asia), and Michael Kremer (University of Chicago) will speak on a special session at the 12th annual Global Empowerment Meeting. [Register now »](#)

September 23: Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence in a Pandemic

Co-hosted with the Center for Global Development (CGD), this webinar features Erica Field (Duke) and representatives from the World Bank, University of Miami, and CGD who will share research on how the pandemic and lockdown impact gender-based violence and actionable policies to prevent and respond to it. [Register now »](#)

Getting Girls Back to School after COVID-19

On August 6, J-PAL Africa, along with the World Bank Gender Innovation Lab and Ministry of Education of Côte d'Ivoire, hosted a webinar to share evidence on interventions that could encourage girls to re-enroll in school after COVID-19. [Watch now \(in French\) »](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAININGS



Enroll now: Measuring Health Outcomes in Field Surveys

J-PAL 350x, Measuring Health Outcomes in Field Surveys, is now open! Enroll in this free self-paced online course to learn best practices for conducting rigorous global health research. Participants will learn from public health researcher Vandana Sharma, as she features her work in India and Kenya, and gain practical insights on study design and measurement through case studies and exercises. [Learn more and register »](#)



Enroll now: Fall semester of MicroMasters

The next semester of our online [MicroMaster's in Data, Economics, and Development Policy \(DEDP\)](#) started on September 8, but it's not too late to join. Through a series of five online courses and in-person exams, learners will gain a strong foundation in microeconomics, development economics, and probability and statistics, while engaging with cutting-edge field research. Students who complete the full DEDP credential are eligible to apply for the [Master's program in DEDP at MIT](#). [Learn more and register »](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

How a basic income experiment helped these Kenyans weather the Covid-19 crisis
[Vox](#)

The NEP's focus on early childhood education can help children live up to their potential
[The Wire](#)

Could giving kids a 50-cent pill massively boost their income years later?
[NPR](#)

In Iraq, mixed-religion soccer teams helped build social cohesion, healed wounds after war
[Phys.org](#)

Adapting to learning needs in the wake of COVID-19 using data and evidence
[Brookings](#)

MCA-Morocco launches project to evaluate national employment policy
Morocco World News

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

Building Social Cohesion between Christians and Muslims through Soccer in Post-ISIS Iraq
Salma Mousa

Randomized Trial Shows Healthcare Payment Reform Has Equal-sized Spillover Effects on Patients Not Targeted by Reform
Liran Einav, Amy Finkelstein, Yunan Ji, Neale Mahoney

Effects of a Universal Basic Income during the Pandemic
Abhijit Banerjee, Michael Faye, Alan Krueger, Paul Niehaus, Tavneet Suri

How Research Affects Policy: Experimental Evidence from 2,150 Brazilian Municipalities
Jonas Hjort, Diana Moreira, Gautam Rao, Juan Francisco Santini

FEATURED JOBS

Policy Manager, Employment Lab, Rabat, Morocco
Communications Associate, CLEAR, New Delhi, India
Training Manager, New Delhi, India
Policy Associate (Agriculture), Worldwide
General Data Research Associate, Worldwide
General Field Research Associate, Worldwide

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

The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) is a global research center working to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. Anchored by a network of more than 225 affiliated professors at universities around the world, J-PAL draws on results from randomized impact evaluations to answer critical questions in the fight against poverty. We build partnerships with governments, NGOs, donors, and others to share this knowledge, scale up effective programs, and advance evidence-informed decision-making. J-PAL was launched at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2003 and has regional centers in Africa, Europe, Latin America & the Caribbean, Middle East & North Africa, North America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.



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