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NEWSLETTER

May 2023



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Launching the Displaced Livelihoods Initiative

Today, over 100 million people have been forcibly displaced—and this figure is projected to increase in the coming decades. Local and international stakeholders are working to strengthen self-reliance and advance sustainable livelihoods for displaced and host communities, but rigorous evidence is needed to identify impactful and cost-effective programs. To address this evidence gap, J-PAL and Innovations for Poverty Action recently launched the [Displaced Livelihoods Initiative \(DLI\)](#), with support from the IKEA Foundation.

Through its inaugural [call for proposals](#), DLI will fund randomized evaluations focusing on resilience; wage employment; entrepreneurship; social cohesion, inclusion, and norms; and rights and regulations in affected contexts.

[Read more](#)

 **ICYMI: CELEBRATING EARTH DAY 2023**



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Expediting climate action through innovative data sources

Rapid action is required to meet the accelerating pace of climate change. In honor of Earth Day, [Maïke Pfeiffer](#) (J-PAL Global) wrote about how real-time and nontraditional data can be used to more quickly evaluate and scale climate innovations. This blog features research funded by J-PAL's [King Climate Action Initiative](#), exemplifying how and highlighting the importance of rethinking our approach to data usage. [Read more »](#)



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Personalized information to reduce indoor pollution in France

In many settings, residential wood burning can be a significant contributor to indoor air pollution, but people are often unaware of its detrimental effects. In France, J-PAL affiliated professor [Elise Huillery](#) (Paris Dauphine University) and coauthors Rita Abdel Sater, Mathieu Perona, and Coralie Chevallier evaluated the difference between providing wood-burning households with general information on its harmful impacts, or both general guidance and specific information on their own pollution levels. They found that only the latter reduced indoor air pollution levels. J-PAL's new Policy Briefcase details more findings and important policy lessons. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED POLICY INSIGHT



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Encouraging health insurance enrollment in the United States

Across the United States, 27.5 million people are not enrolled in health insurance. A new Policy Insight from J-PAL [North America](#) synthesizes evidence from eleven randomized evaluations on the effect of mail,

phone, email, and in-person nudges on health insurance take-up. The analysis found that nudges have small but meaningful impacts on encouraging individuals to enroll in health insurance or to switch to plans with lower out-of-pocket costs, particularly among low-income populations. [Read the Policy Insight »](#)

On the blog, [Cordelia Kwon](#) (J-PAL North America) shares how this insight contributes to evidence about reducing administrative burdens in health coverage and highlights areas for future research. [Read the blog »](#)

FEATURED AFFILIATED PROFESSOR



There's so much to do. I'm excited that the impetus is there to bring together researchers, like myself, to work on these important topics."



Selim Gulesci on girls' education and empowerment

J-PAL affiliated professor [Selim Gulesci](#) (Trinity College Dublin) reflects on how his time conducting policy-oriented gender and labor research is informing his new role as the Scientific Advisor for the Girls' Education and Empowerment [portfolio](#) at [J-PAL Africa](#) . This work aims to improve the lives of adolescent girls in West Africa through greater evidence use in policymaking. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED RESEARCHER BLOG

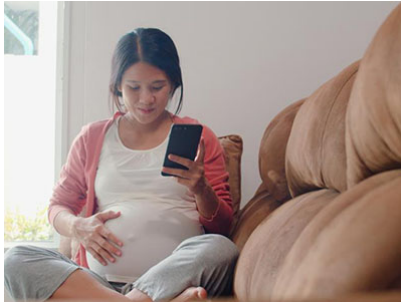


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Enhancing early childhood development through technology

In a new blog post, J-PAL invited researcher Ana Balsa (Universidad de Montevideo) and coauthors Juanita Bloomfield and Alejandro Cid discuss the persistent gaps that appear in early infant development among children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. They share examples from their research to demonstrate how technology can help address this through cost-effective interventions that can be scaled up to reach more children. Read more in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) »

FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY



Photo credit: Haitham Fahmy, J-PAL

Increasing market access for small- and medium-sized enterprises in Egypt

How can increased market access for exports affect profits and productivity for small- and medium-sized enterprises? J-PAL affiliated professors [David Atkin](#) (MIT; Co-Chair, J-PAL's Firms sector), [Adam Osman](#) (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Scientific Director, J-PAL Middle East and North Africa), and [Amit Khandelwal](#) (Columbia Business School) and coauthors partnered with Aid to Artisans, a US-based nonprofit, and Hamis Carpets, an Egypt-based distributor, from 2011–2015 to evaluate the impact of offering small-scale rug manufacturers in Egypt the opportunity to export to high-income countries. They found that this increased firm profits through improvements in firm's technical knowledge, efficiency, and product quality. [Read more](#) »

WELCOMING OUR NEW AFFILIATED PROFESSORS

In summer 2022, 33 talented researchers joined the J-PAL network. We will feature a few of them here each month.



Susanna Berkouwer
University of Pennsylvania



Elizabeth Linos
Harvard Kennedy School



Jack Willis
Columbia University

FEATURED EVENTS

[June 22–23] J-PAL at 20: Science and the Fight Against Poverty

To mark J-PAL's 20th anniversary, join J-PAL Europe for a two-day colloquium hosted by the Collège de France in Paris. Policymakers, social innovators, funders, and researchers, including J-PAL co-founders [Abhijit Banerjee](#) (MIT; Director, J-PAL; Scientific Director, J-PAL Europe) and [Esther Duflo](#) (MIT; Director, J-PAL; Scientific Director, J-PAL South Asia), will discuss the research and policy work in Europe and the role of evidence in alleviating poverty and addressing common challenges on a global scale. Attendance is first-come, first-serve on the day of the event. [Learn more »](#)

[Event video] Investing in Human Capital to Accelerate the Green Transition

On April 14, [Esther Duflo](#) (MIT; Director, J-PAL; Scientific Director, J-PAL South Asia) joined a panel at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings. The discussion focused on how investing in human capital can help increase climate resilience. Esther shared that, "because climate change is so intimately linked to inequality, the solution also has to be linked to [addressing] inequality." [Watch the recording »](#)

[Event recap] Productivity Improvement Solutions for Real Sector IFC Clients

On March 28, in partnership with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the International Growth Centre, J-PAL's [Firms sector](#) co-hosted a workshop, "Productivity

Improvement Solutions for Real Sector IFC Clients,” in Washington, DC. The event brought together researchers, social enterprise leaders, and staff from the IFC and World Bank Group to discuss the role of rigorous evidence in supporting private sector development. [Read insights from the event on our blog »](#)

FEATURED TRAINING

[May 30] Enroll now in the Data, Economics, and Development Policy MicroMasters Program

The next term of our online [MicroMasters program in Data, Economics, and Development Policy \(DEDP\)](#) is now open for enrollment. Courses will begin on May 30 and will offer in-depth knowledge of microeconomics, data analysis, and the foundations of political economy and development policy. Students who complete the DEDP program credential are eligible to apply for the on-campus [Master’s in DEDP](#) at MIT or one of the [pathway universities](#). [Learn more at our webinar on May 16 and enroll »](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

[J-PAL North America announces six new evaluation incubator partners to catalyze research on pressing social issues](#)
MIT News

[Empowering patients with information to improve hospital accountability](#)
Ideas for India

[Youth crime makes headlines, but solutions take time](#)
NewsNation

[Short, sweet, simple: Tips for effective government communications](#)
GCN

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

[Social and Financial Incentives for Overcoming a Collective Action Problem](#)
M. Mehrab Bakhtiar, Raymond P. Guiteras, James Levinsohn, and Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak

[Impact of Small Farmers’ Access to Improved Seeds and Deforestation in DR Congo](#)
Tanguy Bernard, Sylvie Lambert, Karen Macours, and Margaux Vinez

[Credit Building or Credit Crumbling? A Credit Builder Loan’s Effects on Consumer Behavior and Market Efficiency in the United States](#)

Jeremy Burke, Julian Jamison, Dean Karlan, Kata Mihaly, and Jonathan Zinman

Reducing Information Barriers to Solar Adoption: Experimental Evidence from India

Meera Mahadevan, Robyn Meeks, and Takashi Yamano

FEATURED JOBS

(Senior) Policy and Research Associate (Inclusion Projects in Spain), Madrid, Spain

Research Manager (IDEE), Paris, France

Senior Research Associate (Morocco Employment Lab), Rabat, Morocco

Policy Associate (Math Games Scale-Up), Andhra Pradesh, India

Training and Policy Associate, Jakarta, Indonesia

King Climate Action Initiative Fellow, Cambridge, MA, US or remote

Senior Administrative Associate, Cambridge, MA, US

Senior Finance and Operations Associate, Cambridge, MA, US

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