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J-PAL
ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL POVERTY ACTION LAB

NEWSLETTER
August 2022

Photo: Ivan Mahardika | J-PAL

Expanding our Evidence to Policy partnerships

Today, we announced a significant expansion of our work with government partners to support adoption of evidence-informed policies and programs at scale, in collaboration with Community Jameel and Co-Impact.

Building on J-PAL's two decades of experience forging close government partnerships, this work will focus on co-creating and catalyzing use of high-quality evidence, building capacity of government officials to generate and use evidence and data, and strengthening government systems to enable and incentivize evidence-based policymaking, with gender and women's empowerment as a cross-cutting theme.
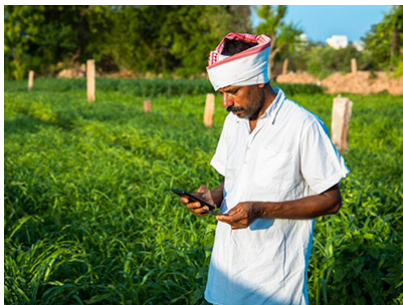
Read more

A new research agenda for digital

and bundled agricultural services

Photo: Shutterstock.com

In 2021 we announced our new Digital Agricultural Innovations and Services Initiative (DAISI), launched in partnership with UC Berkeley's Center for Effective Global Action. After months of planning and with input from researchers and partners, we recently released a research agenda that will guide DAISI's activities and investments over the next few years. The agenda is organized into six priorities related to digital agricultural services and bundling access to multiple services, prioritizing gender, youth, and climate resilience throughout. Read more »

J-PAL North America launches two new partnership opportunities

Photo: Shutterstock.com

This month, J-PAL North America announced the Housing Stability Evaluation Incubator and the State and Local Evaluation Incubator. Both incubators are designed for organizations and government agencies seeking to expand the evidence base on pressing policy questions through rigorous program evaluation. Technical assistance, training, flexible funding, and connections to expert researchers will be provided to selected partners, which will build their capacity to generate evidence and utilize data to drive decision-making. Applicants interested in participating in these incubators are invited to submit letters of interest until October 17, 2022. Read more and register for an upcoming info session »

Soft skills training to boost employment and gender equity

Photo: Paula Bronstein | Getty Images, Images of Empowerment

Training programs to develop soft skills, such as teamwork and conflict resolution, can be important for employees' success at work and can mitigate labor market challenges like unemployment and low earnings. However, evaluations of soft skills training programs have shown varied effects based on gender.

In a J-PAL blog post, we review existing evidence and discuss how J-PAL's Jobs and Opportunity Initiative is generating new research to improve gender-equitable programming. Read more »

📢 NEW POLICY INSIGHT

Photo: Philipimage | Shutterstock

Sending reminders to increase taxpayer compliance

Tax revenues are a necessary source of funds for governments to provide public goods and services, but ensuring that citizens pay their taxes is a challenge globally. Reminding taxpayers of their obligations through mailed letters, digital or phone correspondence, or in-person visits is a common method of boosting compliance.

In a new Policy Insight, J-PAL's Political Economy and Governance sector summarizes evidence from 36 randomized evaluations, which showed that sending tax reminder messages with simplified language is a highly cost-effective strategy to increase short-term tax compliance. Read more »

FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY

Photo: Margaret Triyana | J-PAL

Preventing smoking in Indonesian schools

Although youth smoking has declined worldwide in recent decades, this decrease has occurred largely in high-income countries. In Indonesia, 34 percent of all middle school students currently smoke, and policymakers have a growing interest in prevention programs. In a study supported by J-PAL Southeast Asia, researchers Margaret Triyana and Justin White conducted a randomized evaluation to measure the impact of a school-based program on preventing adolescent tobacco use. The study found that a non-monetary penalty and regular monitoring reduced

smoking, with effects sustained three months after the program ended. However, competition between schools based on their tobacco abstinence rate had no additional impact. Read more »

WELCOMING OUR NEW AFFILIATED PROFESSORS

In summer 2021, 38 talented researchers joined the J-PAL network. Below, we feature the last of the 2021 cohort before the 2022 group joins in the fall.

Susanna Loeb
Brown University

Yusuf Neggers
University of Michigan

David Phillips
University of Notre Dame

FEATURED EVENTS

[August 25] Information Session on Two J-PAL North America Evaluation Incubators

J-PAL North America will host an information session for policymakers and practitioners to learn about its two newly launched incubators, the Housing Stability Evaluation Incubator and the State and Local Evaluation Incubator (see more above), and how to apply. Registrants will have the opportunity to hear from past incubator partners from California's Shasta County Superior Court and Good News Rescue Mission. Register »

[Seminar recap] Using Evidence to Improve Youth Economic Inclusion in Morocco

Last month, the Morocco Employment Lab hosted an evidence sharing seminar on youth economic inclusion in Morocco, in collaboration with the Millennium Challenge Account-Morocco, the National Labor Market Observatory, the World Bank, and the Policy Center for the New South. The seminar gathered high-level policymakers and international researchers to identify policy priorities and evidence gaps, share evidence to inform policy

for better youth economic inclusion, and identify new leads for conducting randomized evaluations. Read more »

FEATURED TRAINING

[September 6] Enroll in the MicroMasters fall semester

The next term of our online MicroMasters in Data, Economics, and Development Policy (DEDP) begins September 6, 2022. Learn to code in R while building a strong foundation in probability and statistics in 14.310x Data Analysis for Social Scientists; gain an introduction to microeconomic theory, together with empirical results and policy implications, in 14.100x Microeconomics ; learn how to design and implement randomized evaluations in J-PAL 102x Designing and Running Randomized Evaluations; gain an introduction to empirical research in development economics in 14.73x The Challenges of Global Poverty; and apply key theories and empirical techniques to explore the effect political institutions have on economic development in 14.750x Political Economy and Economic Development. Students who complete the DEDP credential are eligible to apply for the on-campus Master's in DEDP at MIT. Learn more and register »

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

How a universal basic income helped Kenyans fight Covid [Opinion]
Project Syndicate

Arvind Kejriwal, Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee meet, discuss pollution, jobs
Hindustan Times

Mobile phones can enable learning during school disruptions. Here's how
The Conversation

How police reforms improved the way officers treat women in India
Nature

Fact sheet: Biden-Harris administration launches national effort to support student success
The White House

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

State-Building on the Margin: An Urban Experiment in Medellín
Christopher Blattman, Gustavo Duncan, Benjamin Lessing, Santiago Tobón

Small Mobile Conditional Cash Transfers (mCCTs) of Different Amounts, Schedules, and

Design to Improve Routine Childhood Immunization Coverage and Timeliness of Children Aged 0–23 Months in Pakistan: An Open Label Multi-Arm Randomized Controlled Trial
Subhash Chandir, Danya Arif Siddiqi, Sara Abdullah, Esther Duflo, Aamir Javed Khan, Rachel Glennerster

How Do Online Job Portals Affect Employment and Job Search? Evidence from India
Erin M. Kelley, Christopher Ksoll, Jeremy Magruder

Effect of an Intensive Nurse Home Visiting Program on Adverse Birth Outcomes in a Medicaid-Eligible Population
Margaret A. McConnell, Slawa Rokicki, Samuel Ayers, Farah Allouch, Nicolas Perreault, Rebecca A. Gourevitch, Michelle W. Martin, R. Annetta Zhou, Chloe Zera, Michele R. Hacker, Alyna Chien, Mary Ann Bates, Katherine Baicker

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FEATURED JOBS

Research Manager, Mexico City, Mexico
Fundraising and Partnerships Lead, India (hybrid/location flexible)
Senior Manager (Research Operations), New Delhi, India
Administrative Associate, Jakarta, Indonesia
(Senior) Research and Training Associate, Cambridge, MA, US
(Senior) Research Associate, Cambridge, MA, US
Director of Finance and Operations, Cambridge, MA, US
Senior Development Associate, Cambridge, MA, US

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