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NEWSLETTER

August 2025



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The Evidence Effect: Responding to global crises and lessons from higher-income countries

In the latest from [The Evidence Effect](#), our new series highlighting evidence-informed ideas for the future of development, we explore:

Taking action in conflict and crisis: Over 300 million people urgently need humanitarian aid, yet critical services are being scaled back or suspended, leading to preventable deaths and putting millions more at risk. Restoring funding is vital. Encouragingly, emerging evidence is helping identify promising solutions that protect the most vulnerable and make the best use of limited resources.

[Read more](#)

Effective policy in high-income countries: Generating rigorous evidence on effective programs is a worldwide responsibility. Countries across Europe and North America are grappling with how to address pressing social challenges; these include bolstering social safety nets, improving access to quality education, helping people find jobs, promoting safer communities, and adapting to climate change.

[Read more](#)

We're seeking the next Executive Director of J-PAL Africa

**Apply by August 15**

J-PAL Africa is hiring an executive director to lead a team shaping policy and driving impact across the continent. Based at the University of Cape Town, this is a unique opportunity to guide organizational strategy, build and manage high-impact partnerships, and strengthen rigorous research and evidence-informed policymaking. We are seeking an experienced leader with a background in economics or public policy, a strong track record in senior management, and a deep commitment to using evidence to improve people's lives. [Apply or share with your network now »](#)

New podcast series: Evidence, fieldwork, and policy partnerships in practice

What does it take to conduct rigorous research in complex real-world settings—and turn that evidence into action? In the J-PAL South Asia Researcher Spotlight podcast series, hosted by Sambhav Choudhury (former Senior Research Associate, J-PAL South Asia; current Consultant, Government of Odisha), researchers reflect on navigating fieldwork, partnering with governments, scaling innovations, and staying connected to the people and communities at the heart of the research. Each episode offers a candid look into the challenges and choices behind evidence-informed policymaking in India. Listen on [Spotify](#) or read the transcripts on the [J-PAL blog](#) »



Photo credit: Olivier Asselin, Alamy.com

J-PAL Africa launches new effort to expand access to safe water

J-PAL Africa's latest blog post introduces the Scaling Access to Safe Water in Africa (SASWA) policy portfolio, focused on helping governments design and scale sustainable chlorine subsidy programs to expand access to safe drinking water. Drawing on decades of research from J-PAL affiliated professors, including [Pascaline Dupas](#) (Princeton University; Scientific Director, J-PAL Africa), Nobel laureate [Michael Kremer](#) (University of Chicago), and coauthors, the blog explores what we know about the health benefits and cost-effectiveness of subsidized water treatment. It also highlights how SASWA is working with governments to adapt and expand safe water programs to meet the needs of different communities. [Read more »](#)

EVIDENCE-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING



Photo credit: Digital Green

Expanding farmers' access to low-cost video training

Bihar, India

Digital Green, a global technology nonprofit, partnered with India's Ministry of Rural Development, J-PAL affiliated professors, and J-PAL South Asia to deliver relevant and accessible how-to videos that have helped women farmers boost their agricultural productivity and profits. The program now runs in twelve countries, reaching over 7.2 million farmers.

Policy issue: Access to timely, relevant, and actionable information is often out of reach for small-scale farmers—especially women in remote areas. Traditional in-person group training sessions are resource-intensive, while alternatives like text messaging require farmers to own a phone and be able to read.

Evaluation: Since 2014, researchers have worked with Digital Green, India's Ministry of Rural Development, and J-PAL South Asia to evaluate the impact of incorporating short how-to videos featuring local women farmers into group training sessions delivered through community groups.

Results: Videos increased farmers' agricultural productivity and profits and were more cost-effective than traditional in-person group training.

Research in action: A new Evidence to Policy Case Study shares how these findings informed government decisions in India and across the globe to scale the model, reaching over 7.2 million farmers across twelve countries.

[Read more](#)

Research by: Tushi Baul (Instagram), [Dean Karlan](#) (Northwestern University), Kentaro Toyama (University of Michigan), and Kathryn Vasilaky (California Polytechnic State University)

NEW PUBLICATION



Photo credit: Anthony Berglund

Improving police decision-making through cognitive training

Chicago, United States

Policy issue: Adverse policing practices, such as excessive use of force and unnecessary arrests, can erode public trust and carry high financial costs for police departments. These practices may stem, in part, from the cognitive demands of police work, which often requires rapid decision-making under stress.

Evaluation: Researchers partnered with the Chicago Police Department to design and evaluate a new cognitive training program for officers, called Situational Decision-Making (Sit-D). The training draws on behavioral science to help officers recognize and avoid common cognitive biases by teaching them to consider multiple perspectives in ambiguous policing situations.

Results: In a lab setting, Sit-D trained officers processed ambiguous scenes more thoroughly and efficiently, improved their threat assessment, and communicated more with individuals in simulations. In the field, these officers used nonlethal force less often and made fewer discretionary arrests. They also had fewer injury-related absences, which was enough to offset the program's cost.

[Read more](#)

Research by: [Oeindrila Dube](#) (University of Chicago; Co-Chair, J-PAL's Crime, Violence, and Conflict sector), [Sandy Jo MacArthur](#) (Los Angeles Police Department, Retired), and [Anuj K. Shah](#) (Princeton University)

FEATURED RESEARCHER



Some of the most impactful economic research begins not with abstract theory, but with a deep understanding of real-world challenges.”



Lazare Kovo on using impact evaluations for local policy solutions

In our latest [African Scholar Spotlight](#), Lazare Kovo (PhD Candidate, Emory University) shares how growing up in Benin shaped his passion for development economics. He explains how rigorous impact evaluations can help answer big policy questions, especially on gender gaps, learning, and employment. Lazare also offers advice to African scholars early in their careers hoping to use research to spur real-world change. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED EVENTS

From Evidence to Action: Replicating Effective Homelessness Prevention Across Communities

 **August 28**

As housing insecurity rises and budgets tighten, it's more important than ever to act on evidence-informed solutions. Join [Vincent Quan](#) (Co-Executive Director, J-PAL North America) for a conversation on turning evidence into action to prevent homelessness, part of Evidence Matters, an ongoing collaboration with King County and the Lab for Economic Opportunities.

Speakers Chad Boroquez (Destination: Home), Alyson Moon (Mary's Place), Jessica Orozco (Santa Clara County OSH), and J-PAL affiliated professor [David Phillips](#) will share lessons from their work and discuss how local governments can replicate and scale evidence-informed models in their own communities. [Register »](#)

Five takeaways from J-PAL Europe's climate policy roundtable

 **Bonn, Germany**

[J-PAL Europe](#) recently hosted a policy roundtable alongside the IZA Climate and Environmental Economics workshop, bringing together over eighty policymakers, researchers, funders, and private sector leaders to explore how evidence can drive fair and effective climate action.

In a new blog post, [Michael Braun](#) (Policy Manager, J-PAL Europe) and [Khushi Jain](#) (Policy and Communication Intern, J-PAL Europe) highlight five key takeaways from the event, including the need to institutionalize evidence use locally, communicate benefits clearly,

and bridge funding and timing gaps. Supported by J-PAL's [King Climate Action Initiative](#), the session featured insights from institutions like the Centre for Net Zero, GIZ, and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED TRAININGS

Get ready to learn this fall with DEDP MicroMasters courses

Courses start September 9

Don't miss your chance to build your skills in data and impact evaluation with two graduate-level courses in MITx and J-PAL's [Data, Economics, and Design of Policy \(DEDP\)](#) MicroMasters program.

- [Data Analysis for Social Scientists](#) takes learners from foundational statistics to rigorous, modern data analysis techniques.
- [Designing and Running Randomized Evaluations](#) offers a practical guide to conducting randomized evaluations, including program design, implementation, data collection, and analysis.

Courses are taught by MIT faculty and are free to audit, with the option to pay to take a proctored exam in pursuit of a course certificate. Learners who complete the full credential (five courses) can apply to MIT's residential master's program or one of several pathway universities. [Enroll today »](#)

Enroll in Evaluating Social Programs online

Course start September 16

J-PAL's free, online course on [Evaluating Social Programs](#) is now open for enrollment. Join a community of learners from around the world in this self-paced course to learn how to use rigorous evaluation and evidence to understand and measure impact. [Learn more and enroll »](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

With \$1K in cash aid, he built a life-changing barbershop. Now cash aid is under fire
[Goats and Soda \(NPR\)](#)

[Punjab to launch 'evidence-based' anti-drug school curriculum in government schools on](#)

August 1

The Indian Express

Shaping India's multidimensional fight against poverty [Opinion]

The Hindu

Ganitha-Ganaka programme extended to all government schools across the state

The Hindu

Study finds better services dramatically help children in foster care

MIT News

Iqbal Dhaliwal on building better aid systems

Eyes on Development (Stanford King Center on Global Development)



NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

The Value of Forecasts: Experimental Evidence from India

Fiona Burlig, Amir Jina, Erin M. Kelley, Gregory V. Lane, and Harshil Sahai

Can Bridging the Learning Gap Improve Test Scores on a Key National Exam? Evidence from a Remedial Education Program in Indian Secondary Schools

Gaurav Chiplunkar, Diva Dhar, and Radhika Nagesh

Incentives and Endorsement for Technology Adoption: Evidence from Mobile Banking in Ghana

Emma Riley, Abu S. Shonchoy, and Robert Darko Osei

Reaching Marginalized Job Seekers through Public Employment Services: Experimental Evidence from Ethiopia

Marc Witte, Johanna Roth, Morgan Hardy, and Christian Johannes Meyer



FEATURED JOBS

Senior Policy Associate, Accra, Ghana

(Senior) Research and Training Associate, Paris, France

Policy and Delivery Lead (UM6P-J-PAL Agricultural Lab for Africa), Rabat, Morocco

Research Associate (Education, Morocco Innovation and Evaluation Lab), Rabat, Morocco

Policy Associate, Jakarta, Indonesia

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