



NORTH AMERICA
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
December 2019

Good Morning,

As I reflect on 2019, I want to thank you for helping to make our work possible. I am inspired and energized by all that this community has achieved to advance the field of evidence-based policymaking over the past twelve months. We do this work because we are driven every day to fight poverty and improve lives.

In 2020, to build on our successes and lessons learned in 2019, we will continue to forge new and strengthen existing partnerships to address the complex causes and consequences of poverty in North America. In my recent blog post, I highlight what we see as our highest opportunity areas for the coming year.

We couldn't do this work without you and your support. Here are a couple of ways to get involved:

- [Let us know](#) about an innovative program a government is running.
- [Connect us](#) about a program run by an organization working to improve the lives of people experiencing poverty.
- Enroll in J-PAL and MIT's [Data, Economics, and Development Policy MicroMasters Program](#).
- Take a deep dive into running a randomized evaluation through our [Evaluation Toolkit](#).
- [Support us](#) as we continue to catalyze rigorous research on key social policy questions in the region and translate research into action.

Best wishes to you and yours for a happy and healthy 2020, and I look forward to continuing this important work together in the year to come.

All the best,
Mary Ann Bates
Executive Director, J-PAL North America



J-PAL North America staff gather for staff retreat in Cambridge, MA. Photo: J-PAL

Reflection on 2019

From compelling study results on [housing mobility](#) and [comprehensive support for community college students](#), to our [Evaluation Toolkit](#) and [capacity building for policymakers](#), 2019 has been a momentous year for evidence-based policymaking. As we approach the new year, the J-PAL North America team [reflects on our key accomplishments, lessons learned, and the partnerships](#) that have helped propel this movement forward. This reflection celebrates the ways in which we've learned and grown, and all that we have achieved together in the past twelve months.



Photo: Tectonic

New Year, New Partnerships to Scale Life-Changing Programs

Research partnerships between



Photo: Iqbal Dhaliwal | J-PAL

Advancing the Evidence-Based Policymaking Movement in North America

academics, governments, and organizations can meaningfully improve the lives of individuals experiencing poverty. In [a new blog post](#), J-PAL North America's Executive Director, Mary Ann Bates, reflects on the importance of partnerships in our work and how they will continue to be critical to advancing our mission of reducing poverty. Such partnerships, she explains, can help effective programs reach more students like [Donald](#), a high school senior in New York City who passed his Math Regents Examination with the help of [Saga Education](#), a non-profit that provides personalized tutoring for students. [Read more](#) to learn why these partnerships are strategic and effective, how we plan to continue cultivating relationships with state and local governments and implementing organizations in 2020, and how the broader community can support the evidence-based policymaking movement.

On December 10th, J-PAL co-founders, Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, and J-PAL affiliate, Michael Kremer, were officially awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics. Revolutionizing the field of international development with their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty, their work has also transformed policymaking in the United States. In a [blog post](#) and [Governing op-ed](#), our leadership discusses how these methods are being applied in the United States and the work that remains to be done. J-PAL North America's Associate Director of Policy, Vincent Quan, further explains how randomized evaluations can be used to answer critical policy questions in the US context in a recent [EconoFact policy memo](#). The prize is an incredible validation of the value of science in policymaking, and we hope it can serve as a beacon for more evidence to be generated both abroad and here at home.

Have an idea of content you would like to see in this newsletter? We want to hear from you! Please send your feedback to J-PAL North America Policy and Communications Manager, [Erin Graeber](#).

[J-PAL North America](#) is a regional office of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), a global research center based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Anchored by a network of more than 180 affiliated professors at universities around the world, J-PAL draws on results from randomized impact evaluations to rigorously study what strategies meaningfully reduce poverty and translate research into action.



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