J-PAL
ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL POVERTY ACTION LAB

NEWSLETTER
December 2022

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📣 New! Fellowship for early-career researchers in the Middle East and North Africa

J-PAL Middle East and North Africa (MENA) at The American University in Cairo recently launched the MENA Scholars Fellowship to help early-career researchers build skills and experience designing and conducting randomized evaluations. By creating these pathways for scholars, the Fellowship aims to increase researcher diversity and drive generation of rigorous, policy-relevant evidence in the region.

With the support of a $15,000 stipend over two years, selected fellows will work on randomized evaluations with mentorship from J-PAL affiliated professors and have access to J-PAL courses and trainings. The Fellowship is supported by Community Jameel and the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development. Applications are open until December 31; an informational webinar and Q&A will be held on December 15.

Read more and apply

FEATURED POLICY INSIGHT

Photo: Thomas Chupein | J-PAL

Incentives to improve health worker performance

In contexts where health workers are trained but performance remains low, many policymakers have implemented pay-for-performance incentive programs that reward providers based on measurable performance indicators. In a new Policy Insight, J-PAL's Health sector summarizes evidence from 21 randomized evaluations across thirteen countries that examined the impact of these programs. Our analysis found that providing performance-based pay in addition to base pay can help improve health worker performance. However, design considerations, such as the outcomes that are incentivized and the role of supervisors, are important. Read more »

Photo: Andre Zollinger | J-PAL

On the ground at COP27: Key takeaways from staff

J-PAL staff were in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt for COP27 in November. Speaking on panels alongside leaders in government, development banks, and civil society, members of the J-PAL Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and King Climate Action Initiative teams spoke about the importance of evidence-informed climate action and shared results from rigorous evaluations. On the J-PAL blog, Heba El-Sahn (Senior Policy and Training Associate, J-PAL MENA) and Andre Zollinger (Policy Manager, J-PAL Global) share their key takeaways from COP27, including the urgent need to strengthen climate adaptation. Read more »

Photo: Amanda Girard | J-PAL

Creating internships at J-PAL with the Research in Color Foundation

J-PAL partnered with the Research in Color Foundation in early 2022 to develop an internship program at our head office at MIT for Research in Color mentees. Research in Color's mission is to increase the number of scholars of color in economics and improve retention of underrepresented scholars

in the field, while amplifying meaningful economic and policy research on communities of color. In a blog post, we write more about this new opportunity and share the experiences of two interns who joined our office for a semester. Read more »

Photo: Lucian Coman | Shutterstock

Measuring child and adult speech with practical, wearable technology

Early childhood interventions can support higher educational achievement and lifelong earnings, particularly in low-income countries. But the impacts of different interventions can be challenging to measure. In a new blog post, J-PAL affiliated professor Victoria Baranov (University of Melbourne) and coauthors share recommendations for researchers on an effective, low-cost, wearable technology that can capture and measure child and adult speech—a key tool for rigorous evaluation. Read more »

FEATURED AFFILIATED PROFESSOR

Photo: Courtesy of Robert Darko Osei

Robert Darko Osei on the nexus of agriculture, tech, and development

In the latest installment of our Affiliate Spotlight series, we profile Robert Darko Osei (University of Ghana) and his research on how technology can improve access to information for farmers. Robert is co-chair of the Digital Agricultural Innovations and Services Initiative , a joint initiative of J-PAL and the Center for Effective Global Action that funds research and policy engagement to identify solutions to challenges faced by small-scale farmers around the world. 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.

Sarah Baird
George Washington
University

Joshua Dean
University of Chicago

Juliana Londoño-Vélez
University of California,
Los Angeles

[January 12] Leveraging the Global Findex Microdata for Policy and Research

Hosted by Innovations for Poverty Alleviation (IPA) in partnership with J-PAL, this webinar will bring together leaders on financial inclusion to launch the 2021 Global Findex micro-dataset. The dataset offers updated information on access to and use of financial services and digital payments, as well as insights on behaviors that enable financial resilience. Moderated by Rebecca Rouse (IPA), speakers include J-PAL and IPA affiliated professor Francis Annan (UC Berkeley), IPA affiliates Leora Klapper (World Bank) and Jonathan Morduch (New York University), and representatives from the public and private sectors. Register »

[January 19] Promoting Psychological Well-Being in Preschool Children: Evidence From a Mindfulness- and Yoga-Based Socio-Emotional Learning Intervention

The Innovation, Data and Experiments in Education program, based out of J-PAL Europe, holds a monthly webinar dedicated to a research paper focused on a randomized evaluation of an education-related intervention. As a part of this series, researcher Thomas Villemonteix will present his and coauthors' paper on the effect of a combined mindfulness- and yoga-based socio-emotional learning intervention on preschool children in a low-income area in France. Register »

[January 30–31] Evidence for Climate Action in Latin America and the Caribbean

J-PAL Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), in collaboration with J-PAL's King Climate Action Initiative (K-CAI), will host a webinar to share evidence from randomized evaluations with policymakers and program implementers dedicated to climate action in LAC. The evidence and discussion will focus on K-CAI's four research areas: climate change mitigation, pollution reduction, climate change adaptation, and energy access. The event will be held in Portuguese on January 30 and in Spanish on January 31. Register to attend in Portuguese or Spanish »

[Event recap] Addressing Climate Change, Sustainability, and Poverty in Indonesia

On October 25, J-PAL Southeast Asia (SEA) hosted a conference to share insights from rigorous evidence to support the Government of Indonesia's work increasing climate resilience and mitigation and building a sustainable environment. The conference connected over 130 participants from government agencies, research and academic institutions, and nonprofit organizations to discuss some of Indonesia's most prominent environmental challenges: forests and marine ecosystems, sustainable energy, and air pollution. On the J-PAL blog, J-PAL SEA shares key takeaways from the event. Read more »

FEATURED TRAINING

Enroll in J-PAL 101x: Evaluating Social Programs

J-PAL's recently updated online course on Evaluating Social Programs is now open for enrollment through February 9. This free, self-paced course explores each step in designing a randomized evaluation, from developing a theory of change and conducting the randomization process to navigating design challenges and ethical considerations. Through lectures led by J-PAL affiliated professors and case studies using real-world examples, participants will gain an understanding of both technical design aspects and practical considerations for measuring impact with a randomized evaluation. Join a community of learners from around the world who are interested in learning how rigorous evaluation and evidence can ensure their organizations' programs have the intended impact. Learn more and enroll »

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Covid-induced school closures: Combating learning loss
The Financial Express

Sub-Saharan Africa urged to adopt new teaching model to achieve sustainable development goal
News24

Women in economics: Seema Jayachandran: Change attitudes change lives [Podcast]
IMF Podcasts

Balancing hope and despair in turbulent times [Opinion]
The New York Times

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

Nurturing Childhood Curiosity to Enhance Learning: Evidence from a Randomized Pedagogical Intervention
Sule Alan and Ipek Mumcu

Job Search and Hiring with Limited Information about Workseekers' Skills
Eliana Carranza, Robert Garlick, Kate Orkin, and Neil Rankin

The Impact of Large-Scale Social Media Advertising Campaigns on Covid-19 Vaccination: Evidence from Two Randomized Controlled Trials
Lisa Y. Ho, Emily Breza, Marcella Alsan, Abhijit Banerjee, Arun G. Chandrasekhar, Fatima Cody Stanford, Renato Fior, Paul Goldsmith-Pinkham, Kelly Holland, Emily Hoppe, Louis-Maël Jean, Lucy Ogbu-Nwobodo, Benjamin A. Olken, Carlos Torres, Pierre-Luc Vautrey, Erica Warner, and Esther Duflo

The Psychosocial Value of Employment: Evidence from a Refugee Camp
Reshmaan Hussam, Erin M. Kelley, Gregory Lane, and Fatima Zahra

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FEATURED JOBS

🔴 J-PAL and our partners are recruiting for positions in policy, research, education, and training. Our recruitment drive is open until January 10, 2023. See open positions and apply now »

Hear from staff worldwide about their experiences working for J-PAL.

Watch the videos

Director of J-PAL Africa, Cape Town, South Africa
Deputy Advisor (Egypt Impact Lab at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development), Cairo, Egypt
Policy, Training, and Events Associate (Egypt Impact Lab at the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development), Cairo, Egypt
Research Associate (weather forecasting for farmers), Bengaluru, India

Research Support Assistant (gender sensitive policing), New Delhi, India
Senior Research Associate (Satat Jeevikoparjan Yojana), New Delhi, India
Senior Finance and Operations Associate, Jakarta, Indonesia
Senior Human Resources Associate, Jakarta, Indonesia
Policy Associate, Cambridge, MA, US
Research and Training Associate, Cambridge, MA, US
Senior Human Resources Manager, Cambridge, MA, US
Senior Policy Associate, Cambridge, MA, US
Senior Research and Training Associate, Cambridge, MA, US

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