

To view this email as a web page, go [here](#).



**NEWSLETTER**

February 2024



Photo credit: Salah Malkawi, © European Union, CC BY-ND 2.0

## **Empowering vulnerable communities: J-PAL and IPA launch Humanitarian Protection Initiative**

J-PAL and Innovations for Poverty Action launched the [Humanitarian Protection Initiative \(HPI\)](#) this month, with support from the United Kingdom (UK) international development funding from the UK Government. HPI will generate and share new evidence on the effectiveness of humanitarian programs to improve outcomes for people affected by armed conflict, ensuring their safety, dignity, and rights. HPI prioritizes research on key protection concerns, including preventing and mitigating physical, psychological, social, and legal harm.

[Read more](#)



Photo credit: Sikarin Fon Thanachaiary, World Economic Forum

## Insights from Davos: Navigating global challenges with evidence

In January, [Iqbal Dhaliwal](#) (Global Executive Director, J-PAL) took the stage at the World Economic Forum to identify potential threats, promising opportunities, and emerging trends to guide decision-making. As one of seven experts invited by the Forum to provide horizon scans for 2024 at their Annual Meeting in Davos, Iqbal drew from the J-PAL network's extensive evidence base to share insights on ways to address a number of global challenges including fighting climate change, strengthening democracies, adopting AI for social good, reducing state conflict, and overcoming pandemic generated learning losses. [Watch his talk »](#)

## J-PAL and ENSEA launch training program for Ivorian civil servants

[Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire](#)

On January 15th, [J-PAL Europe](#) and ENSEA—the National School of Statistics and Applied Economics of Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire—launched a multi-year impact evaluation training program. The program aims to train 40–60 civil servants per year and is part of a broader collaboration with ENSEA supported by the French Development Agency and the Ivorian government.

Each 9-month program will include three in-person sessions and an online course from the [DEDP MicroMasters Program](#). The launch event, led by Nialé Kaba, Minister of Economy, Planning and Development, featured a keynote by [Esther Duflo](#) (MIT; Director, J-PAL;

Scientific Director, J-PAL South Asia) on evidence-based policymaking. Esther also previewed the upcoming launch of ADEPT, J-PAL's new Alliance for Data, Evaluation, and Policy Training. [Learn more »](#)

## FEATURED BLOGS



Photo credit: Shutterstock.com

## Harnessing the potential of AI to accelerate middle school math learning

### North America

In October 2023, [J-PAL North America](#) joined the Learning Engineering Virtual Institute (LEVI) as their Evaluation Hub. LEVI's mission is to double students' rate of learning math within five years, with a focus on students from low-income backgrounds. The Evaluation Hub will support seven organizations to rigorously evaluate learning products that harness the potential of AI and machine learning. [Read more »](#)

---

## Strengthening livelihoods through evidence with the Cotopaxi Foundation

### Central America

[J-PAL Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (LAC) launched a new project in Central America to strengthen local organizations' capacity to help members of their communities through different stages of life. The project will build on J-PAL LAC's ongoing partnership with the

Cotopaxi Foundation, which began with a primary emphasis on supporting women’s economic agency. The new project will focus on evidence generation and use in early childhood development, education, and economic agency while maintaining a cross-cutting gender lens. Local organizations interested in evaluating their programs are encouraged to contact J-PAL LAC and join upcoming free trainings and seminars. [Read more »](#)

### MORE FROM THE J-PAL BLOG



Illustration credit: J-PAL

## Celebrating a decade of the AEA RCT Registry: New insights

[Read more »](#)



Photo credit: J-PAL

## Rigorously evaluating cash transfer programs in the United States: Perspectives from other contexts

[Read more »](#)

### NEW PUBLICATION



Photo credit: Young1ove

## Not as easy as A, B, C: Emphasizing transparency in education research when measuring holistic skills

Recent research in education illuminates the connection between holistic skills (e.g. social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative skills) and academic success. In a new literature review and guide, J-PAL's [Learning for All Initiative](#) explores trends in current methods for measuring holistic skills from over 230 randomized evaluations and provides guidance for academics interested in education research. The review suggests improving citation, explanation, and validation standards for measuring holistic skills in randomized evaluations while acknowledging researchers' constraints and incentives.

[Read more](#)

### AFRICAN SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



I encourage researchers to be ambitious in their work—many important questions are waiting to be explored.”



## Arinze Nwokolo on mental health research and the importance of mentorship

**Lagos, Nigeria**

Arinze Nwokolo, Assistant Professor at the Lagos Business School, was recently featured in J-PAL's [African Scholars Spotlight blog series](#). Arinze offers guidance for fellow researchers, including the role of mentors in supporting his career. He shares his passion for development economics, impact evaluations, and areas of interest, focusing on conflict, terrorism, and interventions to enhance productivity. His current research explores the impact of cognitive behavioral therapy on low-income, female entrepreneurs, demonstrating the intersection of academia and real-world impact. [Read more »](#)

## WELCOMING OUR NEW AFFILIATED PROFESSORS

*In summer 2023, 33 talented researchers joined the J-PAL network. We feature a few of them here each month.*



Travis Baseler  
University of Rochester



Eric Mvukiyehe  
Duke University



Emma Riley  
University of Michigan

## FEATURED EVENT

### LEVER Virtual Convening: Pathways to Implementing Evaluations

 **February 15**

Are you part of a US government agency interested in expanding your data and evidence use? J-PAL North America and Results for America's [Leveraging Evaluation and Evidence for Equitable Recovery program](#) offers customized support for state and local governments, fostering a culture of evidence-based decision-making that ensures programs are best positioned to advance economic mobility and racial equity. Join us on February 15 for a virtual convening of government leaders and decision-makers as they share their experiences and challenges implementing rigorous evaluations in their jurisdictions. [Learn more and register »](#)

## FEATURED TRAININGS

### Apply for the Humanitarian Action Research Incubator

 **Applications due: February 21**

Are you a humanitarian professional interested in using impact evaluations to understand your program's effectiveness? From April 8–10, J-PAL and Innovations for Poverty Action will host an in-person randomized evaluation design incubator in Bogotá, Colombia. The workshop will be tailored to organizations that promote sustainable livelihoods for displaced persons and host communities or aim to improve protection outcomes in conflict

settings. Participants will have the opportunity to collaborate with researchers who can apply for research funding through J-PAL's [Humanitarian Protection Initiative](#) and [Displaced Livelihoods Initiative](#).

[Learn more and apply »](#)

---

## Applications open for J-PAL's Evaluating Social Programs course at MIT

Join us for one of J-PAL's in-person [Evaluating Social Programs](#) courses around the world to explore the practical aspects of how to rigorously assess the impact of your programs. The course is designed for professionals from a range of organizations with an interest in incorporating randomized evaluations into their work. Please stay tuned for details on [upcoming regional offerings](#) in Ghana, Indonesia, and India later this year!

### **Applications due: April 4 (discounted fees before March 8)**

Join J-PAL Global and J-PAL North America for their course in Cambridge, United States this June 24–28. [Learn more and apply »](#)

### **MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**

[Illustrating India's complex environmental crises](#)

MIT News

[Reflecting on COP28 — and humanity's progress toward meeting global climate goals](#)

MIT News

[How reforming India's workfare programme raised private sector earnings \[Opinion\]](#)

Ideas for India

[Fixing forest carbon credits \[Opinion\]](#)

Science

---

### **NEW RESEARCH PAPERS**

[Asset Transfers and Anti-Poverty Programs: Experimental Evidence from Tanzania](#)

Sarah Baird, Craig McIntosh, Berk Özler, and Utz Pape

[Helping Children Catch Up: Early Life Shocks and the PROGRESA Experiment](#)

Achyuta Adhvaryu, Teresa Molina, Anant Nyshadham, and Jorge Tamayo

Empowering Adolescents to Transform Schools: Lessons from a Behavioral Targeting  
Sule Alan and Elif Kubilay

Microequity and Mutuality: Experimental Evidence on Credit with Performance-Contingent  
Repayment  
Francesco Cordaro, Marcel Fafchamps, Colin Mayer, Muhammad Meki, Simon Quinn, and  
Kate Roll

 **FEATURED JOBS**

- Associate Director of Research, Cape Town, South Africa
- Associate Director of Policy, Paris, France
- Senior Research Associate (Education Project, Morocco Employment Lab), Rabat, Morocco
- Senior Research Manager (UM6P-J-PAL Agricultural Lab for Africa), Rabat, Morocco
- Senior Policy Associate (UM6P-J-PAL Agricultural Lab for Africa), Rabat, Morocco
- Policy Associate (Labour Markets and Firms), New Delhi, Delhi, India
- Research Manager, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Finance and Operations Manager, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Senior Policy Associate (State Partnerships), Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India
- Evidence to Scale Associate, Cambridge, MA, US

Explore a full list of open positions around the world »



Donate now

This email was sent by: J-PAL  
400 Main Street, Cambridge, MA, 02142 US

[About J-PAL](#)   [Privacy Policy](#)   [Update Profile](#)   [Unsubscribe](#)