

ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL
Poverty Action Lab

J-PAL@TEN

December 7, 2013
Kresge Auditorium, MIT
Cambridge, MA

AGENDA

REGISTRATION AND COFFEE

Director's Welcome

President's Address

Special Remarks

The J-PAL Story:
A Decade of Partnerships

The Origin and Evolution of
Randomized Evaluations in
Development

The Life and Times of the
Field Research Associate

Pratham and J-PAL:
Partners in Learning

Transferring Learning
Across Continents

Adventures in Field Research: The
Dominican Republic and Honduras

From Evidence to Policy

Collaboration for Policy Change:
Randomized Evaluations in
Environment and Energy

Adventures in Field Research: Kenya,
Mali, Sierra Leone, and Uganda

Getting it Wrong, Trying Again,
Getting it Right (Sometimes)

8:30 AM

9:30 AM Rachel Glennerster
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, J-PAL

9:50 AM L. Rafael Reif
PRESIDENT, MIT

10:00 AM Mohammed Abdul Latif Jameel
CHAIRMAN, ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (ALJCI)

10:05 AM Abhijit Banerjee
DIRECTOR, J-PAL

10:25 AM Michael Kremer
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

10:45 AM Shawn Cole
HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

11:00 AM Rukmini Banerji
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS, PRATHAM

11:20 AM Annie Dufflo
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
INNOVATIONS FOR POVERTY ACTION

11:35 AM Alejandra Aponte
RESEARCH MANAGER, J-PAL

11:40 AM Iqbal Dhaliwal
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, J-PAL

11:55 AM Michael Greenstone
MIT

12:10 AM Ali Ahmed, Aletheia Donald,
Eleanor Wiseman
RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, IPA AND J-PAL

12:15 PM Esther Dufflo
DIRECTOR, J-PAL



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LUNCH

Panel Discussion:
Evidence-Based Policy
in Government

Moderator: Abhijit Banerjee

Evidence-Based Grantmaking

Escaping a Poverty Trap: A Social
Safety Net for the Ultra-Poor

Evaluation on a Government
Timeline: Improving Social
Assistance in Indonesia

Right to Information and
Government Accountability

Building a Brighter Future in
Latin America

Adventures in Field Research:
Sierra Leone

The Vision for Experimentation in
North America

J-PAL: The Next Decade

CLOSING

VIDEO MESSAGES BY

Neelima Khetan FORMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SEVA MANDIR

Jim Kim PRESIDENT, WORLD BANK GROUP

Nandan Nilekani CHAIRMAN, UNIQUE IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Jairam Ramesh MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Carolina Trivelli FORMER MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION, GOVERNMENT OF PERU

12:30 PM

1:30 PM Felipe Kast
FORMER MINISTER OF PLANNING, CHILE
Alan Krueger
FORMER CHAIRMAN, COUNCIL OF
ECONOMIC ADVISERS, USA
Martin Hirsch
FORMER HIGH COMMISSIONER, FRANCE

2:45 PM Smita Singh
FORMER DIRECTOR, HEWLETT FOUNDATION

3:00 PM Dean Karlan
PRESIDENT
INNOVATIONS FOR POVERTY ACTION

3:15 PM Benjamin Olken
DIRECTOR, J-PAL
Sudarno Sumarto
POLICY ADVISER, TNP2K

3:30 PM Anjali Bhardwaj
DIRECTOR, SATARK NAGRIK SANGATHAN

3:45 PM Juan Cristóbal Beytía Reyes
CHAPLAIN, TECHO

4:00 PM Tom Bangura
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, IPA

4:05 PM Amy Finkelstein
MIT

4:20 PM Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Dufflo,
Rachel Glennerster, Benjamin Olken
DIRECTORS, J-PAL

4:40 PM

WELCOME

TEN YEARS AGO, J-PAL STARTED WITH JUST A FEW PEOPLE AND A BOLD IDEA: a vision for generating evidence that could be translated into action to improve the lives of the poor. Today we are celebrating the first ten years of J-PAL, reflecting on the progress that has been made, the challenges that remain, and the human stories that connect the different parts of J-PAL's work.

J-PAL is not about any one person, one breakthrough research project, or one policy change based on evidence. Instead, we are celebrating the collective efforts of a network of researchers, staff, and partner organizations who are united by the belief that better evidence can lead to better policies. Together, these efforts are about spurring a larger movement that has helped create a paradigm shift in what it means for an antipoverty program to be successful.

J-PAL is known for its focus on randomized evaluations to measure the effects of antipoverty policies and programs. Through rigorous research and extensive collaboration with NGOs, governments, international organizations, and donors, we work to figure out which approaches work best, and why; to learn how lessons may apply across contexts; and to try to untangle the puzzles that surround the challenge of reducing poverty.

Today we celebrate the many different actors who have come together to help advance a movement for evidence-based policy. Behind the journal articles and tables of research results are a rich array of stories. Today you will hear these stories from pioneers in the policy community who have raised the profile of evidence in decision making; from field staff who make the evaluations possible on the ground by running surveys and ensuring implementation stays on track; and from partner organizations who collaborate with the researchers from the start to design and test innovative approaches to fighting poverty.

Thank you for joining us as we look ahead to the next ten years.

Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Dufflo, Rachel Glennerster, and Benjamin Olken
CO-DIRECTORS



TIMELINE

A SELECTION OF MILESTONES FROM J-PAL'S FIRST DECADE

The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab's (J-PAL) mission is to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is based on scientific evidence.

THE BEGINNING

The Poverty Action Lab is founded at MIT by professors Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Sendhil Mullainathan, with the support of MIT's Department of Economics.

AN ENDURING PARTNERSHIP STARTS

NGO Development Innovations, founded by J-PAL affiliate Dean Karlan, changes its name to Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), and begins an ongoing partnership with the Poverty Action Lab.

WE GET OUR NAME

The Lab is named after the late Abdul Latif Jameel in partial recognition of the incredible support received from his son and MIT alumnus, Mohammed Abdul Latif Jameel.

TRAINING LAUNCHES

J-PAL training programs begin, starting with executive education courses in Cambridge (USA) and Chennai (India). To date, J-PAL has trained 4,094 policymakers and practitioners around the world.

MICROFINANCE STUDIES REPLICATE

The Ultra Poor Graduation program, designed to help the poorest of the poor by providing durable goods, vocational training, and microfinance, is evaluated in India. Replication studies have since begun in Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Pakistan, and Yemen to test the program in different contexts.

AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM SCALES

Research in Ghana, India, and Kenya shows that providing instruction tailored to the learning levels of children who have fallen behind can improve learning. Evidence from these studies contributes to the scale-up of the NGO Pratham's Read India program in 19 states in India, reaching 34 million children.

TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO ACTION

J-PAL creates a dedicated policy group to disseminate evidence from our affiliates' evaluations and to work with governments, NGOs, international organizations, and foundations to help them scale up effective programs.

RESEARCH INITIATIVES SPUR INNOVATION

J-PAL launches the Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (ATAI) as its first research initiative to test innovative ways to help farmers use beneficial technologies. J-PAL now has research initiatives in Governance, Post-Primary Education, Urban Services, US Health Care Delivery, and Youth Programs.

MILLIONS OF CHILDREN DEWORMED

School-based deworming, found to be one of the most cost-effective methods of improving school participation, is scaled up to 59 million children across India and Kenya.

EXPERTS CONVENE FOR POLICY INNOVATION

By request of the Chilean Ministry of Planning, J-PAL assembles the Compass Commission, a group of international and local academics, to identify the major social policy challenges in Chile and to propose innovative programs that could be evaluated using randomized impact evaluations. J-PAL has also engaged with the governments of France, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Peru, and Rwanda.

164.6 MILLION PEOPLE

REACHED BY SCALE-UPS OF PROVEN APPROACHES

91 AFFILIATED PROFESSORS

500 J-PAL AND IPA STAFF WORLDWIDE

439 ONGOING AND COMPLETED RANDOMIZED EVALUATIONS ACROSS 54 COUNTRIES

4,094 PEOPLE TRAINED

NATIONWIDE SCALE-UP

Providing identification cards to beneficiary households is shown to improve access to Raskin, a national rice subsidy program in Indonesia. Following these results, the Government of Indonesia decides to scale up the card distribution to 15.5 million poor households, reaching about 65.6 million people.

2003

J-PAL OPENS AT MIT

8 AFFILIATED PROFESSORS
46 EVALUATIONS

2005

13 AFFILIATED PROFESSORS
72 EVALUATIONS

2007

J-PAL SOUTH ASIA OPENS AT THE INSTITUTE FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

30 AFFILIATED PROFESSORS
181 EVALUATIONS

J-PAL EUROPE OPENS AT THE PARIS SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

2009

J-PAL LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN OPENS AT PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE CHILE

55 AFFILIATED PROFESSORS
235 EVALUATIONS

J-PAL AFRICA OPENS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

2011

78 AFFILIATED PROFESSORS
354 EVALUATIONS

2013

J-PAL NORTH AMERICA OPENS AT MIT

J-PAL SOUTHEAST ASIA OPENS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF INDONESIA

J-PAL@TEN

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