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NEWSLETTER

March 2024



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Expanding J-PAL's efforts in corporate impact and sustainability

For twenty years, J-PAL's research network has conducted rigorous randomized evaluations across the public, private, and nonprofit spheres to produce insights into the most effective approaches in the fight against poverty. We are working to deepen our collaborations with private sector actors through expanded evidence generation, synthesis, and training with the aim of improving corporate impact and sustainability, in partnership with Community Jameel. In a new blog post, J-PAL's [Corporate Impact and Sustainability Partnerships](#) team explores the rise of sustainable business, existing evidence partnerships, and the road ahead.

[Read more](#)

NEW PUBLICATION



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Designing evidence-based life skills programs for adolescent girls

In a new policy brief, [J-PAL Africa](#) reviews sixteen randomized evaluations of life skills programs' impact on women's empowerment, providing a consolidated overview of the evidence landscape on life skills programming and drawing out key mechanisms leading to impact. The brief also highlights practical considerations for effective life skills program design in a complementary [design guide](#).

Policy issue: Human capital, broadly defined as personal characteristics that help people be productive, is critical to improving educational outcomes, attaining technical knowledge, and accruing years of skilled experience. Globally, fewer investments are made in women's capital than in that of men—leading to gender gaps. Life skills programs are intended to alleviate external and internal barriers to women's empowerment and agency to improve their overall outcomes.

Results: When implemented with consistency and nuance, life skills programs had a positive impact on multiple indicators of women's agency, such as "power within," a measure of aspirations and self-efficacy, as well as downstream outcomes such as education, employment, child marriage/early pregnancy, and gender-based violence. The policy brief explores four likely mechanisms underlying these findings and shares key lessons to effectively design life skills programs.

[Read more](#)

Authored by: Alessia Mortara (former Senior Policy Manager, J-PAL Africa and current Head of International Policy Engagement, Food and Land Use Coalition), [Primrose](#)

[Adjepong](#) (J-PAL Africa, Policy Manager), and [Akshara Gopalan](#) (J-PAL South Asia, Policy and Training Manager).

Lessons learned from 20 years of fighting poverty

New Delhi, India

In January 2024, J-PAL South Asia organized its first-ever public exhibition, *Shaping Policy, Transforming Lives*, to celebrate J-PAL's 20 years of fighting poverty around the world using rigorous evidence. Visitors experienced the journey of trial and error in evidence generation through interactive exhibits and researchers' first-hand stories from the field. In the first of a three-part blog series, [Shobhini Mukerji](#) (Executive Director, J-PAL South Asia) lays out pitfalls to avoid while working with civil society organizations, governments, and philanthropies on evidence-informed programs. Drawn from her experience at J-PAL over the last 16 years, Shobhini calls this her "What Not To Do List." Her first lesson: Don't look for "silver bullets." [Read more »](#)

Incorporating remote sensing data into randomized evaluations

Data collection using remote sensing techniques, like satellite imagery or on-site monitors, offers alluring possibilities in randomized evaluations: lower data collection costs, a longer time series of data both before and after an intervention, geographic spillovers, and more. A new blog post from J-PAL's [Environment, Energy, and Climate Change](#) sector (E2C2) introduces a set of guidelines that outlines best practices for using remote sensing data in randomized evaluations.

The guidelines, compiled by J-PAL affiliated professor [Kelsey Jack](#) (University of California, Davis; Co-chair, E2C2) and co-author [Kendra Walker](#) (University of California, Santa Barbara), with inputs from experts across the field of development economics, aim to help researchers navigate the opportunities and challenges associated with leveraging this new source of data. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY



Photo credit: Courtesy of CNM

Informing Policy with Research

Brazil

Policy issue: Given the widespread growth in the number of randomized evaluations conducted in recent decades, it is important to generate causal evidence on whether policymakers value findings from program evaluations and whether those findings can influence their beliefs—and, ultimately, the policies they choose to implement.

Evaluation: Researchers partnered with the National Confederation of Municipalities in Brazil in 2016 to understand policymakers' interest in research findings and how access to those findings affects policymaker's adoption of evidence-informed policies.

Results: Those who were invited to an information session on a simple, evidence-informed policy to increase tax compliance were more likely to implement that policy within the next two years. This suggests that access to research findings may still be a limiting factor in adopting policies that are shown to be effective.

[Read more](#)

Research by: J-PAL affiliated researchers [Jonas Hjort](#) (University College London), [Diana Moreira](#) (University of California, Davis), [Gautam Rao](#) (University of California, Berkeley), and co-author Juan Francisco Santini (World Bank)

FEATURED BLOGS



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LEVER Partner Spotlight: Ricardo Basurto-Dávila on the County of San Diego’s Shallow Rent Subsidy program evaluation

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Photo credit: Instituto de Economía, UC Chile

A new diverse cohort joins the vibrant graduate network of the J-PAL/UC Diploma in Impact Evaluation

[Read more »](#)



Photo credit: Bryce Vickmark

The next decade of RCT research: What can we learn from recent innovations in methods?

[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.



Augustin Bergeron
University of Southern California



Silvia Prina
Northeastern University



Anant Sudarshan
University of Warwick

FEATURED MULTIMEDIA

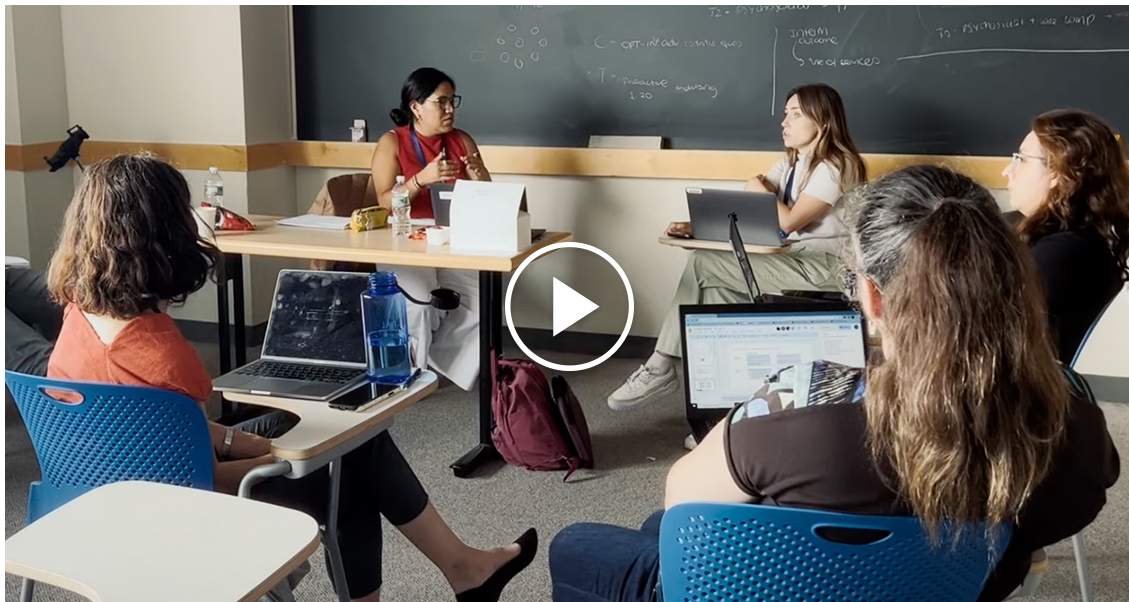


Photo credit: J-PAL

WATCH: Evaluating Social Programs participants share how the course impacted their work

Discover how J-PAL's [Evaluating Social Programs](#) course empowers participants to generate and use evidence to understand the impact of their programs. In the video, two past participants share their experiences applying course knowledge to design and implement evaluations of educational programs in Chile and state government investments in the United States. Registration information is below. [Watch the video](#) »

FEATURED TRAININGS

Apply for J-PAL's Evaluating Social Programs course at MIT

📅 Applications due: April 4

Curious to learn if your organization's programs are achieving their intended impact? Don't miss the chance to participate in J-PAL's Evaluating Social Programs course in Cambridge, US this June 24–28 to explore how randomized evaluations can be used to rigorously assess impact and inform decision-making. [Learn more and apply today](#) »

Does your work focus on programs and policies in Africa, South Asia, or Southeast Asia? Stay tuned for details on [upcoming Evaluating Social Programs courses](#) in other locations later this year.

📱 MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

[Nobel Symposium 2024: 'Poor Economics \(almost\) 15 years later' \[Video\]](#)

Stellenbosch University

[How accurate long-range forecasts of monsoon onset can be climate adaptation tool for farmers](#)

Down to Earth

[International experts discussed Uzbekistan's progress in the fight against poverty](#)

UZ Daily

[What is a firm again? The fluidity of firm boundaries in developing country firms](#)

World Bank Blogs

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

[Are Women Blamed More for Giving Incorrect Financial Advice?](#)

Martin Abel, Emma Bomfim, Izzy Cisneros, Jackson Coyle, Song Eraou, Martha Gebeyehu, Gerardo Hernandez, Julian Juantorena, Elizabeth Kaplan, Danielle Marquez, Peyton Mulhern, Jack Mullen, Ayana Opong-Nyantekyi, Rin Osathanugrah, Joe Paul, Austin Philie, Luke Tingley, and Jane Wang

[Experimental Evidence on the Effectiveness of Nonexperts for Improving Vaccine Demand](#)

Marcella Alsan and Sarah Eichmeyer

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

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

[Long-Range Forecasts As Climate Adaptation: Experimental Evidence From Developing-Country Agriculture](#)

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

FEATURED JOBS

[Research Associate \(Informal Health Markets\), Freetown, Sierra Leone](#)

[Associate Director of Policy, Paris, France](#)

[Policy Manager \(Humanitarian Initiatives\), Paris, France](#)

[Research Associate \(Education Project, Morocco Employment Lab\), Rabat, Morocco](#)

[Senior Research Associate \(UM6P-J-PAL Agricultural Lab for Africa\), Rabat, Morocco](#)

[Research Associate \(Breakthrough Project\), New Delhi, Delhi, India](#)

[Senior Research Associate \(SEWA Wage Insurance Experiment\), Ahmedabad, Gujarat](#)

[Research Associate, Jakarta, Indonesia](#)

[Senior Evidence to Scale Associate, Cambridge, MA, US](#)

[Web and Digital Communications Specialist, Cambridge, MA, US](#)

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