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J-PAL
ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL POVERTY ACTION LAB

NEWSLETTER
April 2020

Photo: Paula Cobleigh | Shutterstock.com

Increasing adherence to COVID-19 guidelines: Insights from existing health evidence

The World Health Organization, national health agencies, and other experts have issued guidance on best practices for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Yet, following these guidelines is not always easy. Drawing on evidence from rigorous research, J-PAL's Health sector provides recommendations on increasing guideline adherence that can inform policymakers' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more »

Expert advice for online learning

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many classrooms worldwide have shifted courses online, presenting challenges for instructors and learners alike. J-PAL, with MIT's Department of Economics, has offered the online MicroMasters program in Data, Economics, and Development Policy (DEDP) since 2017. In two blog posts, J-PAL staff share lessons

learned from our experience developing and delivering an online master's program.

For instructors: We share key lessons for keeping students engaged and learning. Read more »

For students: We interviewed a MicroMasters learner who shared his keys to success. Read more »

Building a virtual community within J-PAL

Like many, all J-PAL staff have been working from home for the past few weeks. From bi-weekly town hall meetings to online yoga and cooking classes, our staff have developed creative ways to stay connected and adapt our work to these unique and challenging circumstances. Read more »

FEATURED PUBLICATION

What works to enhance women's agency: Lessons from a new literature review

Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik/Reportage by Getty Images

International Women's Day (March 8) celebrated the many achievements of women and called for action to advance gender equality. In honor, we highlighted insights from our review of 160 studies on what works to enhance women's agency. Read more »

EVIDENCE-INFORMED DECISION MAKING

Using evidence for long-term policymaking in Indonesia

Policymakers need new information to adjust their programs and address challenges that emerge. Over the course of nine years, Benjamin A. Olken (MIT;

Director, J-PAL; Scientific Director, J-PAL Southeast Asia) and co-authors partnered with the government of Indonesia to evaluate their community block grant, Generasi. Based on an early evaluation, the government decided to switch to performance-incentivized grants , while results from studies on the longer-term effects informed two new programs.

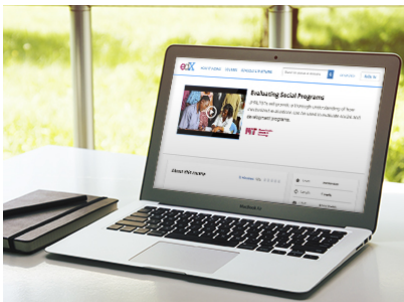In a blog post, J-PAL staff reflect on maintaining this long-term research partnership. Read more »

AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHT

Karthik Muralidharan on the transformative power of public policy

As a development economist, Karthik Muralidharan (UCSD; Co-Chair, J-PAL Education sector) studies how scarce resources should be allocated to maximize impact. He says, "Over the past twenty years, I've seen how there is stunning variation in the cost-effectiveness of policies that sound equally sensible sitting in a conference room...The job of the researcher is to bring objective evidence into the discussion." Read our profile »

UPCOMING COURSE

Enroll now in J-PAL 101x: Evaluating Social Programs

J-PAL's online Evaluating Social Programs course begins April 28. This is a free, self-paced course to learn how to use randomized evaluations to rigorously measure the impact of social programs. Through lectures from renowned MIT faculty and J-PAL affiliated professors, along with case studies from real randomized evaluations, participants will cover topics ranging from how to effectively measure outcomes and choose an appropriate sample size to common threats to analysis. Learn more and register »

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Poor countries need to think twice about social distancing (Opinion)
Foreign Policy

How to help the poor amid COVID-19? Give them money, says Nobel laureate Esther Duflo
Marketplace

Easing access to the safety net, and why we need to do it now (Opinion)
Governing

Connecting with voters in a time of social distancing (Opinion)
Scientific American

How you can protect your community, not just your own health (Opinion)
New York Times

Working from home can make people more productive. Just not during a pandemic
Vox

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

Failure of Frequent Assessment: An Evaluation of India's Continuous and Comprehensive
Evaluation Program
James Berry, Harini Kannan, Shobhini Mukherji, Marc Shotland

How Important is the Yellow Pages? Experimental Evidence from Tanzania
Brian Dillon, Jenny C. Aker, Joshua E. Blumenstock

The Economic Consequences of Increasing Sleep Among the Urban Poor
Pedro Bessone, Gautam Rao, Frank Schilbach, Heather Schofield, Mattie Toma

The Welfare Effects of Social Media
Hunt Allcott, Luca Braghieri, Sarah Eichmeyer, Matthew Gentzkow

FEATURED JOBS

*While we are not currently conducting in-person interviews due to the COVID-19
pandemic, we are still hiring for a number of open positions.*

Associate Director of Research and Training, Cambridge, MA, US
Director of Research, Education, and Training, Cambridge, MA, US

Development Coordinator, Cambridge, MA, US
Development Officer, Cambridge, MA, US

Explore open positions around the world »

The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) is a global research center working to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. Anchored by a network of more than 190 affiliated professors at universities around the world, J-PAL draws on results from randomized impact evaluations to answer critical questions in the fight against poverty. We build partnerships with governments, NGOs, donors, and others to share this knowledge, scale up effective programs, and advance evidence-informed decision-making. J-PAL was launched at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2003 and has regional centers in Africa, Europe, Latin America & the Caribbean, North America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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