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NEWSLETTER

December 2020



Photo: AUN UN IST | Tobin Jones

Explore a new blog series from J-PAL Africa examining digital finance and identification

Governments across Africa are considering new ways of digitizing financial services and identification, but knowledge of the potential impacts is limited. The [Digital Identification and Finance Initiative in Africa's](#) blog series delves into key policy and research questions on different digital identification and payments systems. Through a series of blog posts, staff detail evidence on [digital IDs](#), [mobile money](#), [digitizing government payments](#), and more. [Read the series](#) »



Photo: Jonathan Torgovnik | Getty Images | Images of Empowerment

J-PAL launches new initiative on gender and economic agency

Women around the world face unique challenges to participating in the labor force. The COVID-19 crisis has further exacerbated these inequities. With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, J-PAL's [Gender sector](#) launched the [Gender and Economic Agency Initiative](#) to support innovative

research on strategies to promote women's work.

[Read more »](#)



Photo: Mohammad Shahnawaz | Shutterstock.com

Reflections from two J-PAL initiatives on lessons learned from years of funded research

After three years, J-PAL and Innovations for Poverty Action's Governance, Crime, and Conflict Initiative has funded nearly 100 research projects with support from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. On our blog, we provide lessons learned to promote peace and good governance, reduce crime, and support individuals and communities recovering from conflict. [Read more »](#)

Over the past seven years, J-PAL's [Post-Primary Education Initiative](#) has funded 140 research and policy projects to answer key questions on how to improve the delivery of quality, relevant, and equitable post-primary education. As the initiative comes to a close, we share research and policy lessons emerging from funded studies. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED POLICY INSIGHT



Photo: Jianbing Lee | Shutterstock.com

Improving learning outcomes through school-based health programs

Poor health is often a barrier to students' ability to learn, especially in low- and middle-income countries. A review of eight randomized evaluations from Burkina Faso, China, Kenya, and the United States showed that health interventions delivered at schools can improve both students' health and learning outcomes. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED AFFILIATED PROFESSOR



Photo: MIT

Q&A with MIT's Christopher Knittel on his climate research

Christopher Knittel (MIT) sheds light on the research questions he is pursuing to inform industrial policies on greenhouse gas emissions and carbon co-pollution reductions. [Read more »](#)

WELCOMING OUR NEW AFFILIATED PROFESSORS

This past summer, 34 new affiliated professors joined the J-PAL network. We'll feature a few of them here each month; click through to read more about their research interests.



Rulof Burger
Stellenbosch University



Ofer Malamud
Northwestern University



Natalia Rigol
Harvard Business School

FEATURED EVENTS

[Webinar recording] Towards Inclusive Digital Finance in Indonesia

In October, J-PAL Southeast Asia's [Inclusive Financial Innovation Initiative](#) hosted a virtual launch event to discuss key issues and challenges to advancing inclusive digital financial services in Indonesia. Initiative Co-Chair [Simone Schaner](#) (University of Southern California) summarized findings from their [landscape white paper](#), which kicked off a panel with representatives from Indonesia's Financial Services Authority and the Bank of Indonesia. [Read the event recap and watch recording »](#)

[Webinar recording] Social Contact in Divided Societies: Emerging Insights and Implications for Practice

Last month, J-PAL and Innovations for Poverty Action's Governance, Crime, and Conflict Initiative explored whether intergroup contact can reduce discrimination and prejudice, including in conflict-affected contexts. This event was the first in a series showcasing emerging results and policy lessons from the first three years of its funded research.

[Watch the recording »](#)

UPCOMING TRAININGS

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

J-PAL's online Evaluating Social Programs course is now open! 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 J-PAL affiliated professors, along with case studies of 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

[Dadisman & Schneider: Tutoring can help reverse COVID-related learning loss. 6 principles for doing it right](#)

The 74

[J-PAL North America announces partners through inaugural Housing Stability Evaluation Incubator](#)
MIT News

[COVID-19 lockdown and migrant workers: Survey of vocational trainees from Bihar and Jharkhand](#)

Ideas for India

[Reducing labour market information frictions with skill certificates: Evidence from South Africa](#)

J-PAL Blog

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

[Did COVID-19 Market Disruptions Disrupt Food Security? Evidence from Households in Rural Liberia and Malawi](#)

Shilpa Aggarwal, Dahyeon Jeong, Naresh Kumar, David Sungho Park, Jonathan Robinson, Alan Spearot

Long-term Effects of the Targeting the Ultra Poor Program

Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Garima Sharma

Financial Education for Female Foreign Domestic Workers in Singapore

Rashmi Barua, Gauri Kartini Shastry, Dean Yang

From Extreme to Mainstream: The Erosion of Social Norms

Leonardo Bursztyn, Georgy Egorov, Stefano Fiorin

FEATURED JOBS

Between November 23, 2020 and January 11, 2021, J-PAL and our partner organizations are recruiting for positions in education, finance, operations, policy, research, and training.



In our video series, we hear from staff across the world about their experience working at J-PAL.

[Watch the videos](#)

[Climate Research and Policy Fellow, Paris, France](#)

[Data Analyst - IDEA Lab, New Delhi, India](#)

[Research Associate, Hyderabad, India](#)

[Research Associate - IDEA Lab, Chandigarh, India](#)

[Research Associate, Place-SSE, Nagaon, India](#)

[Postdoctoral Associate \(Training\), Cambridge, MA, US](#)

[Postdoctoral Associate, Cambridge, MA, US or abroad](#)

[Postdoctoral Associate, Gender and Economic Agency Initiative, Cambridge, MA, US, or abroad](#)

[Senior Policy Associate \(Education\), Cambridge, MA, US or abroad](#)

[Policy Associate \(Education\), Cambridge, MA, US or abroad](#)

[Policy Associate, Cambridge, MA, US or abroad](#)

[Undergraduate Policy and Communications Intern \(Spring 2021\), Cambridge, MA, US or abroad](#)

[Explore a full list of 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 225 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, Middle East & North Africa, North America, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.



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