

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



NEWSLETTER

October 2025



Photo credit: Shutterstock.com

Indian state of Gujarat selected as Earthshot Prize finalist for pioneering work with J-PAL and EPIC on emissions markets

What if pollution came with a price tag? That's the idea behind the [Emissions Market Accelerator](#) (EMA), a joint initiative from J-PAL and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC), which works with governments to build systems that cut industrial plants' pollution, helping people breathe cleaner air.

J-PAL's long-standing partnership with Gujarat and EPIC to [pilot, evaluate, and scale](#) this innovative approach now extends across India and other countries through the EMA. Earlier this month, the Earthshot Prize, founded by HRH Prince William, recognized Gujarat as one of three finalists for their 2025 "Clean Our Air" award as a result of this work.



[Read more](#)

J-PAL joins global leaders for key conversations alongside the UN General Assembly meetings

 **New York**

J-PAL joined global leaders in New York this September for the UN General Assembly's high-level meetings. Leadership and staff shared evidence with government delegations, spoke at events hosted by BRAC, UNICEF, and GiveDirectly, and met with longtime partners and new collaborators. These conversations centered on a pressing reality: shrinking aid budgets. This makes it more important than ever to invest in programs that deliver greater impact with fewer resources—like those featured in our recent Evidence Effect series. [Read more »](#)

Global partners join forces to inform responsible AI policy

AI is changing lives—but who is it working for? To better understand where it helps, where it harms, and how to make it work for everyone, Community Jameel, J-PAL, the British Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, the Canadian International Development Research Centre, and IDinsight are partnering to support the AI Evidence Alliance for Social Impact. This new initiative will build rigorous research on how AI is used in Africa and Asia, support locally-led studies, and help scale solutions that deliver real impact. [Read more »](#)

Celebrating J-PAL North America's inaugural Climate Action Learning Lab cohort

J-PAL North America recently launched the [Climate Action Learning Lab](#), convening over 25 government leaders from six US cities and states. Over three months, participants built skills to generate and use evidence in climate policy and applied research insights to their own work. The next phase of the program will focus on launching new randomized evaluations and expanding this network of local policy leaders. [Read more »](#)

EVIDENCE-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING



Photo credit: Shutterstock.com

Improving healthy choices for youth and changing attitudes through educational entertainment

📍 Nigeria

Policy issue: Nearly 40 million people around the world are living with HIV, roughly two-thirds of them in sub-Saharan Africa. While practicing safe sex can reduce transmission of the virus, many public health campaigns have struggled to shift behavior—especially among young people.

Evaluation: The MTV Staying Alive Foundation partnered with J-PAL-affiliated researchers and the World Bank to test the impact of MTV's *Shuga*, a drama series designed to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and promote safer choices among young people.

Results: Watching *Shuga* increased viewers' knowledge of HIV, increased testing rates, and reduced stigma. Women were less likely to test positive for chlamydia—a reduction the World Bank estimated could generate up to US\$150 worth of health benefits for every US\$1 invested in *Shuga*.

Research in action: The MTV Staying Alive Foundation has drawn lessons from the randomized evaluation to raise funding, adapt messaging, and scale the *Shuga* franchise to reach viewers across 72 countries.

[Read more](#)

Research by: Abhijit Banerjee (MIT), Eliana La Ferrara (Harvard), Victor Orozco (World Bank)

FEATURED EVALUATION SUMMARY



Photo credit: Shutterstock.com

The impact of outreach and assistance from navigators on Medicaid renewals in the United States

📍 United States

Policy issue: As policymakers debate Medicaid's future, including proposed changes to funding and coverage, millions of Americans continue to face the risk of losing Medicaid coverage due to administrative burdens like confusing rules, information barriers, and lack of internet access.

Evaluation: Researchers teamed up with Wisconsin's Medicaid agency and Covering Wisconsin, an organization that supports people in signing up for and maintaining their health insurance, to test low-cost and scalable outreach strategies—written outreach (text message versus postcard) and telephone-based outreach (pre-recorded calls). They wanted to see if simple messages and offers of help could boost Medicaid renewal rates.

Results: The pre-recorded call increased Medicaid renewal rates by preventing procedural denials. This finding held for the full population, as well as in key sub-populations such as children, Tribal members, people with chronic conditions, and low-income adults. People receiving a call were more likely to call the Covering Wisconsin hotline to receive help. Variations in written outreach (postcard versus text message) did not affect Medicaid

renewal outcomes; the text message achieved the same outcomes as a postcard but at lower cost.

[Read more](#)

Research by: Rebecca Myerson (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Allison Espeseth (Covering Wisconsin), and Laura Dague (Texas A&M University)

FEATURED BLOGS



Photo credit: University Mohammed VI Polytechnic (UM6P)

New voices to advance food security and agriculture solutions in Africa

 **Rabat, Morocco**

In September, the [UM6P-J-PAL Applied Lab for Agriculture \(UJALA\)](#) brought together over 70 PhD students and faculty to launch its [African Scholars Program](#). The initiative will support early-career researchers leading rigorous studies on small-scale farming and food security. In a new blog, [Hicham El Azami](#) (Lab Director, UJALA) shares highlights from the event, where participants exchanged ideas about evaluating agricultural tools and practices to boost farmers' yields, profits, and resilience. The energy in the room made one thing clear: locally-led research partnerships are already taking root. [Read more »](#)

How teacher development programs can unlock better preschool learning

Nearly all Brazilian children aged 4 and 5 now attend preschool. The challenge? Ensuring quality education. Priscila Costa (former Policy and Research Manager, J-PAL LAC) highlights evidence from Peru and Colombia showing that investing in programs to improve teacher pedagogy in the classroom—rather than simply hiring more staff—can boost children's learning. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED RESEARCHER



My proximity to rural communities gave me firsthand experience of how ineffective and sometimes misplaced interventions were.”



Abdul-Basit Tampuli Abukari on using impact evaluations for agricultural development

In our latest African Scholar Spotlight, Abdul-Basit discusses how digital innovations in agriculture are helping farmers in Ghana. From mobile payments for cocoa farmers to livestock tracking and remote veterinary services, these programs are improving farmers' incomes, protecting their animals, and boosting food security. He also offers advice for young African researchers on building strong research skills, embracing feedback, and pursuing innovative research. [Read more »](#)

WELCOMING OUR NEW AFFILIATED PROFESSORS

This summer, we welcomed 29 talented researchers to the J-PAL network. We will feature a few of them here each month.



Kjetil Bjorvatn
Norwegian School of
Economics

Ali Cheema
Lahore University of
Management Sciences

Patrick Turner
University of Notre Dame

FEATURED MULTIMEDIA



Photo credit: J-PAL

WATCH: Creating cleaner air and water in Egypt

Named after the Egyptian deity of the Nile, the [Hub of Advanced Policy Innovation for the Environment](#) (HAPIE) is an extension of the [Egypt Impact Lab](#) hosted in Egypt's National Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development, supported by Community Jameel and the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development. HAPIE is part of J-PAL's worldwide [Air and Water Labs](#), which provide policymakers with valuable evidence on the most cost-effective technological and policy solutions to address climate change and poverty.

In two new videos, see HAPIE's approach in action with farmers in Egypt, and hear from co-founders and government partners on what inspires their commitment for sustainable change. See the [mission in action](#) and [hear from our partners](#) »

FEATURED EVENTS

Register: Research to Action for Resilient Agriculture

 October 23

Join J-PAL and the Center for Effective Global Action for the final webinar in our three-part series exploring evidence-informed strategies to help small-scale farmers become more resilient to climate change. In this upcoming session, J-PAL researchers Ram Fishman (Tel Aviv University) and Nick Hagerty (Montana State University) will discuss how technology can help small-scale farmers irrigate their crops without draining groundwater. [Register now »](#)

View the webinars: Egypt and Thailand collaborate on designing better health policies

Egypt's Universal Health Insurance System (UHS) is focused on developing a sustainable, equitable benefits package. Earlier this year, the [Egypt Impact Lab at J-PAL Middle East and North Africa](#), in collaboration with the Universal Health Insurance Authority and the World Health Organization in Egypt, launched a webinar series to foster cross-country knowledge sharing and strengthen the role of evidence in driving health reforms.

In the most recent session, speakers from Thailand's Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program discussed their experience using an assessment tool to inform benefit package design and explored how similar approaches could guide Egypt's UHS reforms. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED TRAINING

ICYMI: Free online J-PAL course on Evaluating Social Programs

 **Open for enrollment through December 2**

Interested in gaining practical tools to design rigorous impact evaluations and using evidence to inform policy decisions? Enroll today to access the self-paced course for free, or upgrade for \$99 to receive a certificate from J-PAL and MITx upon passing the course. [Learn more and enroll »](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

World's first 'air pollution market' in Surat chosen as finalist for Earthshot Prize [Video]
[ThePrint](#)

Life's Work: An Interview with Esther Duflo
[Harvard Business Review](#)

Direct cash transfers effective in poverty alleviation, says J-PAL's Iqbal Singh Dhaliwal
Money Control

Fiscal reforms: J-PAL's Dhaliwal urges states to fix finances for faster poverty reduction;
calls for scheme rationalisation and focus on human capital
Time of India

A guaranteed income won't stop people from wanting to work [Opinion]
Wall Street Journal

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

Expectations and Adaptation to Environmental Threats
Husnain F. Ahmad, Matthew Gibson, Fatiq Nadeem, Sanval Nasim, and Arman Rezaee

The Demand for Mobility: Evidence from an Experiment with Uber Riders
Peter Christensen, Gustavo Nino, and Adam Osman

The Lasting Effects of Working while in School: A Long-Term Follow-Up
Mery Ferrando, Noemi Katzkowicz, Thomas Le Barbanchon, and Diego Ubfal

Incentives and Endorsement for Technology Adoption: Evidence from Mobile Banking in
Ghana
Emma Riley, Abu S. Shonchoy, and Robert Darko Osei

FEATURED JOBS

Senior Communications Associate (UM6P-J-PAL Agricultural Lab for Africa), Rabat, Morocco
Senior Policy & Training Associate (UM6P-J-PAL Agricultural Lab for Africa), Rabat, Morocco
Communications Manager, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

Explore a full list of open positions around the world »

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

About J-PAL

Privacy Policy

Update Profile

Unsubscribe