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NEWSLETTER
September 2023



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Launching Air and Water Labs in Egypt, India, and South Africa

Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and South Asia are on the front lines of the global air and water crises. As these challenges are exacerbated by climate change, there is increasing urgency for high-impact and cost-effective solutions. J-PAL Africa, MENA, and South Asia, with support from Community Jameel, are launching [Air and Water Labs \(AWL\)](#) to generate evidence-based solutions to increase access to clean air and water.

To expand the work of J-PAL's [King Climate Action Initiative](#), AWL will partner with governments at the city level in Cape Town, at the national level in Egypt, and at the state level in India to bring together researchers and policymakers in areas where impactful clean air and water solutions are most urgently needed.

[Read more](#)



Photo credit: J-PAL SEA

10 years of J-PAL SEA improving lives through evidence

J-PAL Southeast Asia (SEA), based at the University of Indonesia, is celebrating their [tenth anniversary](#). Over the last decade, J-PAL SEA has become a leading voice in efforts to ensure that regional policies to reduce poverty are informed by rigorous scientific evidence.

To mark this milestone, J-PAL SEA hosted an event in Jakarta bringing together researchers and partners from government institutions, development organizations, NGOs, and the private sector. Speakers reflected on achievements from the last ten years and highlighted the importance of fostering partnerships to create better evidence, society, and policy. [Read key takeaways »](#)

NEW POLICY INSIGHT



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Strategies to increase FAFSA filing in the US

Financial aid, loans, and Federal Pell Grants—all essential to many students' ability to afford college—require students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for access. However, hurdles like unknown deadlines and tax information can prevent students from completing the form. [J-PAL North America's](#) new Policy Insight synthesizes evidence from seven randomized evaluations of interventions aiming to increase FAFSA filing in the United States. The analysis finds that personalized and timely nudges, such as text messages, can increase filing but these effects may dissipate over time. Read more of the [findings](#) and their implications in the larger context of [administrative burdens and higher education](#) »

NEW PUBLICATION



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The benefits and dangers of credit for small businesses

Lack of financing is a key constraint to productivity and income for small businesses worldwide. In Egypt, J-PAL affiliated professors [Gharad Bryan](#) (London School of Economics, J-PAL) and [Adam Osman](#) (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Scientific Director, J-PAL Middle East and North Africa), with Dean Karlan (Northwestern University), evaluated the impact of large loans on the revenues, profits, wage bills, productivity, and household expenditures of small businesses owners. The loans did not impact profits for the average borrower. However, entrepreneurs predicted to be top performers saw much higher returns than their peers, while profits halved for business owners predicted to be low performers. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED BLOGS



Photo credit: Clare Hofmeyr, J-PAL

20 for 20: Empowering change in Ghana

Through J-PAL's [African Scholars programs](#), researchers who are based at an institution in Africa or attended secondary school in Africa have access to funding, mentorship, and training opportunities to develop and drive rigorous policy evaluation across the continent. Edward Asiedu (Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana) began his partnership with J-PAL through this program, and is now a J-PAL [invited researcher](#) focusing on designing and evaluating interventions and financial products to reduce poverty and inequality in Ghana.

In the latest installment of J-PAL's "[20 for 20: Partner Voices](#)" [blog series](#) to celebrate our 20th anniversary, Edward shares his experience as a researcher in

Ghana and his journey to development economics.

[Read more »](#)



Photo credit: Elle, Unsplash

Aligning firms' economic and environmental incentives

Private companies in lower- and middle-income countries face heavy burdens from climate change, while also working to reconcile economic growth and environmental needs. A new blog post, coauthored by [Michael Hou](#) (Senior Policy Associate, J-PAL Global) and Daniela Gianoli (Associate Program Manager, Innovations for Poverty Action), shares evidence on ways to align economic incentives with climate adaptation and environmental quality goals, including research funded by J-PAL's [King Climate Action Initiative](#). The post also identifies key questions about how firms can increase their responsiveness to growing environmental challenges. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED MULTIMEDIA

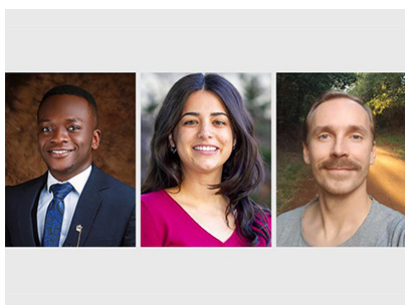


Photo credits: DEDP alumni Chuka Ezeoguine (left), Helena Wajnman Lima (middle), and Tomáš Dulka (right).

Watch: Interviews with DEDP master's program alumni

Discover the remarkable journeys of three alumni from J-PAL and MIT's [Data, Economics, and Design of Policy](#) (DEDP) master's program in the latest installment of our DEDP Alumni Spotlight series. In new videos, Tomáš Dulka, Helena Wajnman Lima, and Chuka Ezeoguine speak about their experience in the master's program and share their current work. [Watch now »](#)

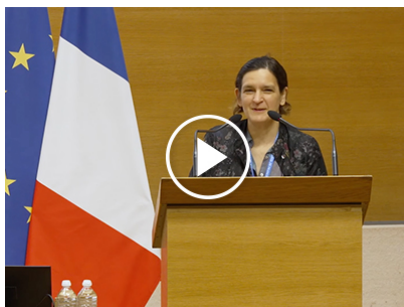


Photo credit: J-PAL Europe

ICYMI: Celebrating J-PAL at 20 with J-PAL Europe

In honor of J-PAL's 20th anniversary, distinguished guests reflected on evidence to tackle poverty and climate change in Europe at [J-PAL Europe's June colloquium](#) hosted by the College de France in Paris. [Read key takeaways and watch the keynote sessions](#) »

WELCOMING OUR NEW AFFILIATED PROFESSORS

In summer 2023, 33 talented researchers joined the J-PAL network. We will feature a few of them here each month.



Gaurav Chiplunkar
University of Virginia



Lucia Corno
Cattolica University



Brian Dillon
Cornell University

FEATURED EVENT

[Event videos] Promoting early childhood development in Guatemala

J-PAL Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has partnered with Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (UVG) to foster [early child development](#) and alleviate poverty through evidence-informed decision-making in Guatemala. As part of this collaboration, the organizations recently co-hosted two events, available in Spanish on our YouTube channel. The first was an [in-person event](#) in Guatemala City to invite private and governmental organizations to join this work; the second was a [webinar](#) on how to participate in their first program to promote early childhood development in the country, [PROSA](#) »

FEATURED TRAININGS

Enroll now in the Data, Economics, and Design of Policy MicroMasters Program

The fall term of our online MicroMasters program in Data, Economics, and Design of Policy (DEDP) started yesterday, September 12. This fall, for the first time, learners can complete courses in one of two tracks: the *International Development Track* or the *Public Policy Track*. Courses include a new elective course, [Microeconomic Theory and Public Policy](#), and a refreshed edition of [The Challenges of Global Poverty](#). Students who complete the DEDP program credential are eligible to apply for the on-campus [Master's in DEDP](#) at MIT or one of our [pathway](#) universities. [Learn more and enroll](#) »

Don't forget to enroll in J-PAL 101x: Evaluating Social Programs

J-PAL's free online course on Evaluating Social Programs is open for enrollment until December 1. This self-paced course explores each step in designing a randomized evaluation. Join participants from around the world in learning how to use rigorous evaluation and evidence to understand whether programs are achieving their intended impact. [Learn more and enroll](#) »

New on MIT's Open Learning Library! J-PAL 350x: Measuring Health Outcomes in Field Surveys

J-PAL's online course on Measuring Health Outcomes in Field Surveys is now accessible on MIT's Open Learning Library. Using case studies of projects in India and Kenya, this free course provides practical insights for the design and implementation of high-quality global health research. Topics include measuring individual and population health, selecting health indicators, designing questionnaires, selecting measurement tools, and ethical considerations for health data collection. [Learn more and enroll](#) »

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

[Making every research step count: Introducing the ATAI Data Portal](#)
Center for Effective Global Action

[Can the global air pollution crisis lead to effective climate action? \(Opinion\)](#)
The Hill

[Michigan school tutoring funds not likely until spring state officials say](#)

Bridge Michigan

Want to fix America's maternal health crisis? Here's where to start. (Opinion)

The Washington Post

Facilitating risk-sharing through self-help groups in Bihar

Ideas for India

Scaling up the impact of rainwater harvesting techniques on small-scale farming in Niger

Center for Effective Global Action

NEW RESEARCH PAPERS

Impact of the Covid-19 Crisis on India's Rural Youth: Evidence from a Panel Survey and an Experiment

Bhaskar Chakravorty, Apurav Yash Bhatiya, Clément Imbert, Maximilian Lohnert, Poonam Panda, and Roland Rathelot

Weathering the Ride: Experimental Evidence on Transport Pricing, Climate Extremes, and Future Travel Demand

Peter Christensen, Adam Osman, and Abigail Stocker


A Cognitive View of Policing

Oeindrila Dube, Sandy Jo MacArthur, and Anuj K. Shah

The Taxman Cometh: Pathways Out of a Low-Capacity Trap in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Jonathan L. Weigel and Elie Kabue Ngindu

FEATURED JOBS

 J-PAL and our partners are recruiting for office- and field-based Research Associates. Our early recruitment drive is open until October 9th. [See open positions and apply now »](#)

(Senior) Finance Manager, Paris, France

Associate Director (Policy), Paris, France

Finance and Operations Associate, Paris, France

Data Intern (Capacity Accelerator Network), New Delhi, Delhi, India

Research Associate, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Finance and Operations Associate (Grant), Jakarta, Indonesia

Policy Manager, Jakarta, Indonesia

Research Manager, Jakarta, Indonesia

Business Analyst, Cambridge, MA, US

Senior Education Manager, Cambridge, MA, US

Explore a full list of open positions around the world »



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