

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



**NEWSLETTER**

August 2024



Photo credit: Roxane 134, Shutterstock.com

**NEW POLICY INSIGHT**

## Public works programs and labor market outcomes

In a new Policy Insight, J-PAL's [Labor Markets sector](#) synthesizes results from thirteen randomized evaluations of public works programs that look at short- and long-term impacts on participants' earnings and employment, as well as broader labor market outcomes.

**Policy issue:** Every year, tens of millions of people worldwide participate in public works programs, which provide government-sponsored employment for infrastructure and community service projects. These programs have become a popular tactic for

policymakers to attempt to alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment.

**Results:** Public works programs temporarily increased earnings and employment. Although these benefits often dissipated within a year of a program's conclusion, participants' assets and savings growth persisted long-term. If policymakers aim to increase employment and earnings in the long run, it is unclear whether fixed-duration, smaller-scale public works programs provide labor market benefits over and above other interventions like traditional cash transfer programs

[Read more](#)

---

### NEW EVIDENCE TO POLICY CASE STUDY

## Leveraging AI at scale to strengthen high school students' writing skills

 **Espírito Santo, Brazil**

**Policy issue:** Public high school students in Brazil often don't have access to individualized writing support, which can negatively affect their performance in national admissions exams and future educational and career opportunities.

**Evaluation:** Researchers evaluated the impact of [giving high school students access to an artificial intelligence \(AI\) tool](#) developed by the Brazil-based ed-tech literacy platform Letrus. The AI tool complemented teacher instruction by providing rapid feedback on students' writing as they prepared for the national university admissions exam and freed up teachers' time to give more individualized assistance to students.

**Results:** Students with access to the platform improved their writing abilities and increased their scores on the university entrance exam.

**Research in action:** A new Evidence to Policy Case Study from [J-PAL Latin America and](#)

the Caribbean shares how the state government of Espírito Santo, where the evaluation took place, rolled out the AI platform to high school seniors statewide. Letrus is now pursuing partnerships with other state governments in Brazil to further scale the tool.

Read the case study

**Research by:** Bruno Ferman (São Paulo School of Economics; J-PAL affiliated professor), Lycia Lima (Sao Paulo School of Business Administration), and Flávio Riva (Sao Paulo School of Business Administration)

### FEATURED UPDATES



Photo credit: J-PAL

## Expanding North American poverty alleviation research with Arnold Ventures

In July, [J-PAL North America](#) announced a significant new grant from Arnold Ventures to enhance regional work in rigorous research and evidence-based policymaking. This collaboration will expand the evidence base on effective poverty solutions, increase the diversity of J-PAL's research network, and deepen the organization's focus on racial and economic equity. As J-PAL North America enters its second decade, this partnership promises to accelerate the impact of research on policy and social outcomes across the region. [Read more »](#)

---

## Creating an NGO consortium to scale up Every Child Counts

### India

In a vast and diverse country like India, developing large-scale solutions for complex policy issues, such as foundational learning in arithmetic and reading, poses a significant challenge. With this in mind, [J-PAL South Asia](#) launched an innovative knowledge-transfer consortium for civil society organizations to share learnings about and accelerate the tailored adoption of [Every Child Counts](#) in India.

In a blog post, [Sachit Manoj Deshmukh](#) (Policy Associate, J-PAL South Asia), and Sahreen Shamim (former Policy Manager, J-PAL South Asia) unpack the motivation behind the new consortium and share how long-term, multi-stakeholder partnerships are critical for adapting evidence-based programs to local settings for maximum impact. [Read more »](#)

---

## Navigating climate justice in MENA: Emerging carbon markets

Carbon markets are emerging as a potential avenue to combat climate change, including in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), as they aim to reduce carbon emissions and promote corporate accountability. However, rigorous evaluation is needed to ensure these

markets achieve their intended impacts and support climate justice. In a new blog post, [J-PAL MENA](#) examines the role of evidence in this challenge and how their [Hub of Advanced Policy Innovation for the Environment](#), founded in partnership with Community Jameel, will work with governments to evaluate and scale policies that reduce emissions and ensure clean air and water. [Read more »](#)

### NEW RESEARCH RESOURCE

## Integrating qualitative methods into randomized evaluations

This two-part introductory guide offers practical advice on using qualitative tools to inform the design of randomized evaluations, uncover underlying mechanisms, and plan for a mixed methods approach with co-authors across disciplines. [Read part 1](#) and [part 2](#) »

### WELCOMING OUR NEW AFFILIATED PROFESSORS

*This summer, we welcomed 35 talented researchers to the J-PAL network. We will feature a few of them here each month.*



Orla Doyle  
University College Dublin



Pieter Serneels  
University of East Anglia

Raissa Fabregas  
University of Texas at  
Austin

## FEATURED TRAININGS

### Open enrollment and scholarships for the DEDP MicroMasters Program

 **September 10**

The [MicroMasters program in Data, Economics, and Design of Policy \(DEDP\)](#) is open for enrollment, with online courses starting on September 10. The master's level courses cover topics in development economics, public policy, and data analysis. Participants who complete the program are eligible to apply for an accelerated master's program at [MIT](#) or one of our pathway universities.

Courses are free to audit, with the option to pay to take a proctored exam in pursuit of a course certificate. Scholarships are available to learners in Brazil thanks to the generous support of the Lemann Foundation. [Enroll today »](#)

---

### Evaluating Social Programs: Register now for courses in Bali, Bengaluru, or online

Join us for one of J-PAL's [Evaluating Social Programs](#) courses to delve into the practical aspects of how to rigorously assess the impact of your programs. The training provides an in-depth look at why and when randomized evaluations can be used to rigorously measure social impact, methods and considerations for their design and implementation, and how findings can inform evidence-based policies and programs.

 **September 17**

J-PAL's free, online course on Evaluating Social Programs is now open for enrollment. Join a community of learners from around the world in a self-paced course to explore each step in designing a randomized evaluation. [Learn more and enroll »](#)

 **September 30–October 4**

J-PAL Southeast Asia will offer a five-day training tailored to policymakers and development practitioners in Bali, Indonesia. Applications are due **August 24**. [Learn more and apply »](#)

 **December 11–13**

CLEAR and J-PAL South Asia will hold a three-day training for nonprofits, businesses, and investors in Bengaluru, India. Participants in this course will also have the opportunity to engage deeply with innovators and industry leaders through a half-day keynote panel and open-house networking session. Applications are due **October 4**. [Learn more and apply »](#)

 **MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**

[Greater than the sum: Designing credit that works for women](#)  
BBC

[Leveraging social protection to combat climate disasters in South Africa](#)  
Radio Islam

[Achieving Medicaid goals through test and learn: The role of RCTs](#)  
Health Affairs

 **NEW RESEARCH PAPERS**

[The State Capacity Ceiling on Tax Rates: Evidence from Randomized Tax Abatements in the DRC](#)  
Augustin Bergeron, Gabriel Tourek, and Jonathan L. Weigel

When Effective Teacher Training Falls Short in the Classroom: Evidence from an Experiment in Primary Schools

Suzanne Bellue, Adrien Bouguen, Marc Gurgand, Valerie Munier, and André Tricot

The Mother-In-Law Effect: Heterogeneous Impacts of Counseling on Family Planning Take-Up in Jordan

Priyasmita Ghosh and Rebecca Thornton

Allocating Labor Across Small Firms: Experimental Evidence on Information Constraints

Morgan Hardy, Seongyoon Kim, Jamie McCasland, Andreas Menzel, and Marc Witte

 **FEATURED JOBS**

Communications Manager, Cape Town, South Africa

Policy Manager (Firms), Cape Town, South Africa

Associate Director of Research, Cape Town, South Africa

Senior Policy Associate, Santiago, Chile

Senior Research Manager, Rabat, Morocco

Senior Research Operations Associate, Amman, Jordan

Research Associate (Foundational Literacy and Numeracy), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

(Senior) Research Associate (Personalized Adaptive Learning), Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India

Senior Finance and Operations Manager, Cambridge, MA, US

Senior Policy Associate, Cambridge, MA, US

[Explore a full list of open positions around the world »](#)



Donate now

---

This email was sent by: J-PAL

400 Main Street, Cambridge, MA, 02142 US

**[About J-PAL](#)**

**[Privacy Policy](#)**

**[Update Profile](#)**

**[Unsubscribe](#)**