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NEWSLETTER

November 2024

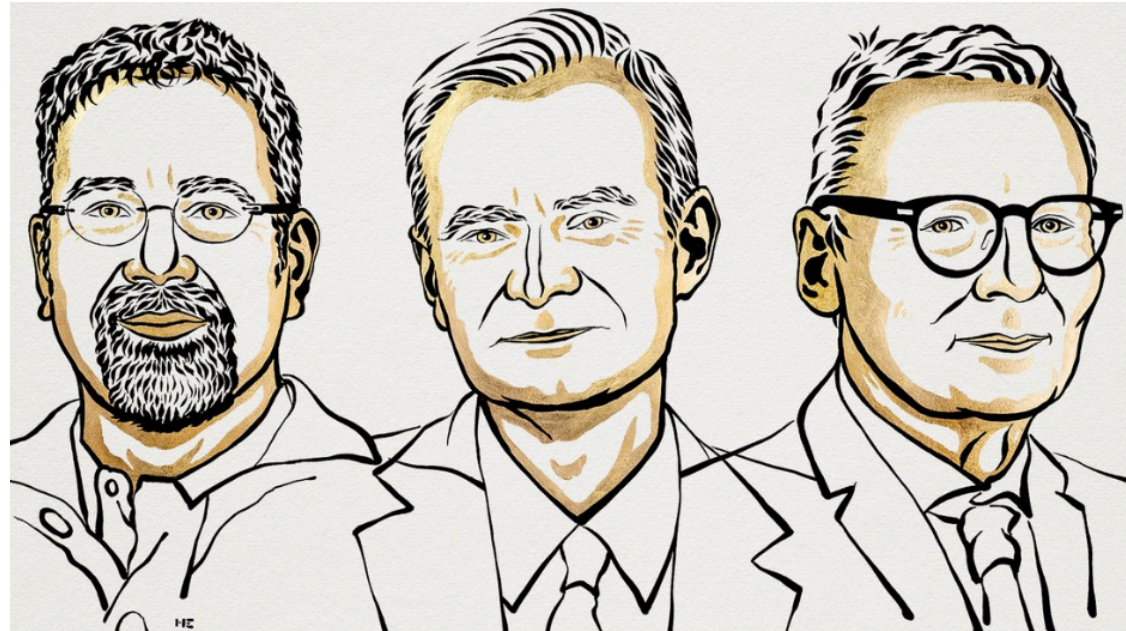


Illustration credit: Niklas Elmehed © Nobel Prize Outreach

Nobel Prize in Economics awarded to J-PAL affiliated researchers

J-PAL affiliates [Daron Acemoglu](#) (MIT) and [James Robinson](#) (University of Chicago), with [Simon Johnson](#) (MIT), were awarded this year's Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics "for studies of how institutions are formed and affect prosperity." Heartiest congratulations to Daron, James, and Simon on this outstanding achievement.

[Read more](#)

Building a worldwide Alliance for Data, Evaluation, and Policy Training (ADEPT)

Earlier this year, [J-PAL Europe](#) announced a multi-year capacity-building partnership focused on rigorous impact evaluation with the National School of Statistics and Applied Economics of Abidjan (ENSEA) in Côte d'Ivoire. In October, the first cohort of Ivorian civil servants to participate in the partnership's program graduated.

At an event marking this milestone, we welcomed ENSEA as a founding member of the new Alliance for Data, Evaluation, and Policy Training (ADEPT), a global network convened by J-PAL and Community Jameel that aims to empower the next generation of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners with the tools to innovate, test, and scale effective policies.

[Read more »](#)

Launching the Visiting Researcher Program with the Inter-American Development Bank

In October, at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)'s headquarters in Washington, DC, [J-PAL Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (LAC) and the IDB jointly launched the Visiting Researcher Program. Building on years of collaboration, the program embeds researchers from the J-PAL network within IDB to help generate new evidence-based insights for policymakers and reinforces the IDB's ongoing commitment to foster evidence-based policy in the region. [Read about the launch and watch the event »](#)

FEATURED POLICY INSIGHTS



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Helping job seekers find employment through credible skills signals

In a new Policy Insight, J-PAL's [Labor Markets](#) sector reviews evidence from fourteen randomized evaluations assessing the impact of strategies to help job seekers improve their employment and earnings through tools that showcase or credibly certify their skills to employers.

Policy issue: Globally, roughly 188 million people were unemployed in 2023, yet 75 percent of employers reported difficulties filling vacancies. Job seekers often struggle to showcase their skills, while employers may find them difficult to assess.

Results: Credible skills signals like certificates help improve information flow between job seekers and businesses, often improving employment and earnings at a low cost. More and better information helps workers job search effectively and allows businesses to improve employment matches. Open questions remain about how these signals can increase

businesses' profits and job creation, and whether they may displace some job seekers or improve employment outcomes when scaled.

Read the insight



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VoxDev Talk: David Atkin on how connecting businesses to markets can promote growth

In a new podcast on VoxDev, J-PAL affiliated professor [David Atkin](#) (MIT; Co-Chair, J-PAL's Firms sector) discusses key lessons from a new J-PAL Policy Insight, which finds improved market access can help businesses in low- and middle-income countries grow. David notes, "Firms may be small because they serve small markets. They are not going to be able to justify the investments in modern technologies."

[Listen to the podcast »](#)

FEATURED PUBLICATION



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Research agenda for decarbonizing transportation in North America

In a new white paper, [J-PAL North America](#) synthesizes evidence on how policies can drive behavior change to decarbonize transportation.

Policy issue: Transportation is the fastest growing contributor to global CO₂ emissions. The economic and health impacts of these emissions disproportionately affect communities who are of color or low-income. Equitable transportation decarbonization requires identifying and advancing effective strategies to shift from conventional vehicles to low-carbon modes.

Findings: There is currently a research gap between evidence and local transportation decarbonization policy priorities. The white paper outlines a policy-relevant research agenda for randomized evaluations across fleet transition, public transportation, and traffic congestion in North America, and recommends strategies to measure equity and welfare. [Read more »](#)

FEATURED BLOGS

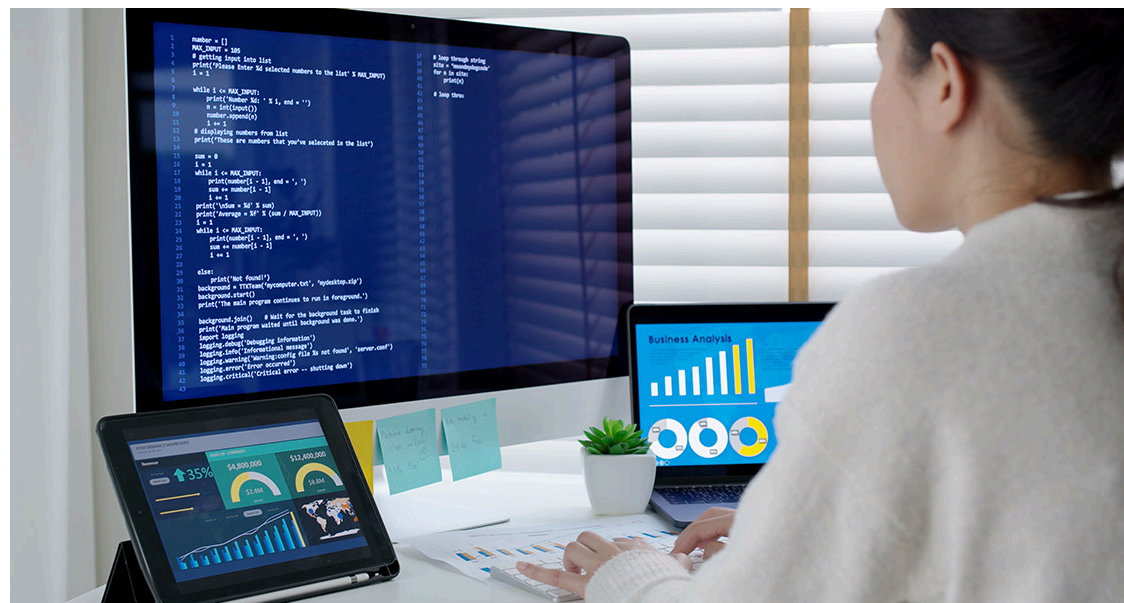


Photo credit: Shutterstock.com

Striking the right balance: How researchers can fix problems with standard balance tests

Balance tests are a widely used tool for randomized evaluations to check that characteristics like age, income, or gender are not linked with assignment to the program. In a new [working paper](#) featured on the J-PAL blog, researchers reveal how standard balance tests often misidentify imbalances and offer practical alternatives for researchers to get more reliable results. [Read more »](#)

Research by: Jason Kerwin (University of Washington), Nada Rostom (University of Antwerp), and Olivier Sterck (University of Antwerp)

Test, learn, adapt: Maximizing impact through continuous rapid evaluation

Embedding faster or “rapid” evaluation early within the program development process can provide valuable, real-time insights that can lead to greater impact and cost-effectiveness before a program scales. Adopting this approach has been critical at [Educate!](#), a youth employment organization in East Africa, as they set out to create a new livelihoods model to support the millions of youth unable to complete secondary school with the skills to thrive within local economies. [Read their guest post on the J-PAL blog »](#)

FEATURED RESEARCHER



It is good to do something that will positively impact the development and policy landscape in our country and continent.”



Zakayo Zakaria shares the importance of training and mentorship in his career path

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

In our latest [African Scholar Spotlight](#), Zakayo Zakaria, a research fellow at the Economic and Social Research Foundation, shares the important role training and mentorship played in his career trajectory and motivation to work on impact evaluations. Zakayo also shares his research interests in early childhood development and pensions for older people. [Read more »](#)

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.



Vincent Somville
NHH Norwegian School of
Economics



Christine Valente
University of Bristol



Crystal Yang
Harvard Law School

FEATURED MULTIMEDIA



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[WATCH] How J-PAL's Air and Water Labs bring innovation and evidence to the policymaking cycle

Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and South Asia are on the front lines of the global air and water crises. Climate change and inequality are worsening—making access to clean air and water increasingly challenging.

In a new video, we share how J-PAL and Community Jameel's [Air and Water Labs](#) are tackling the most pressing air and water challenges by incorporating evidence throughout the policymaking process. Labs led by [J-PAL Africa](#), [MENA](#), and [South Asia](#) partner with government agencies in Egypt, India, and South Africa, respectively, that serve nearly 260 million people. [Watch now](#) »

FEATURED EVENT

Apply now: Feedback seminar for early childhood development research

 **Apply by November 15**

J-PAL [Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (LAC) will host the second edition of the Early Work Seminars, a space for early-career researchers to receive feedback from more experienced researchers on the design and data collection for randomized evaluations of early childhood development programs in LAC. The event will take place on December 13. Researchers are encouraged to apply by submitting proposals by November 15. [Apply now](#) »

Iqbal Dhaliwal on pioneering inclusive AI

On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York in September, J-PAL Global Executive Director [Iqbal Dhaliwal](#) spoke at Mastercard's Impact Data Summit on strategies to adopt [AI for social good](#). Iqbal and his fellow panelists discussed the evolution of data in social impact, and how emerging AI technologies are reshaping the landscape. [Watch the event recording »](#)

FEATURED TRAININGS

Don't miss the chance to enroll in J-PAL's Evaluating Social Programs online course

 **Enroll by December 9**

J-PAL's free, online Evaluating Social Programs course is underway. Enroll by December 9 to complete the twenty hours of content on your own schedule by December 20. Join a global community of learners to gain practical skills for designing a high-quality randomized evaluation and using reliable evidence to maximize program impact. Access the materials for free or upgrade to be eligible to receive a course certificate for a \$99 fee. [Learn more and enroll »](#)

Open enrollment for the DEDP MicroMasters Program

Term starts January 21

The MicroMasters program in [Data, Economics, and Design of Policy \(DEDP\)](#) is open for enrollment, with the next term starting on January 21. The online courses cover a variety of topics, including development economics, public policy, and data analysis. Anyone who completes the DEDP MicroMasters credential can apply for an accelerated master's program at [MIT](#) or one of the pathway universities. Courses are free to audit, with the option to pay to take a proctored exam in pursuit of a course certificate. [Enroll today »](#)

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

[What happens when an AI assistant helps the tutor, instead of the student](#)
Education Week

[How to spend one trillion dollars: The US decarbonization conundrum \[Opinion\]](#)
Nature

[Researcher-provider partnerships can help identify effective solutions for homelessness \[Opinion\]](#)
Next City

[Government of Karnataka partners with J-PAL South Asia to accelerate and scale policy innovations in school education](#)
The Print

[Three receive Nobel in Economics for research on global inequality](#)
The New York Times

 **NEW RESEARCH PAPERS**

Investing in the Next Generation: The Long-Run Impacts of a Liquidity Shock
Patrick Agte, Arielle Bernhardt, Erica Field, Rohini Pande, and Natalia Rigol

Inclusive Teaching: Spotting Social Isolation in the Classroom
Sule Alan, Michela Carlana, and Marinella Leone

A Scalable Approach to High-Impact Tutoring for Young Readers
Kalena E. Cortes, Karen Kortecamp, Susanna Loeb, and Carly D. Robinson

Redesigning Payments for Ecosystem Services to Increase Cost-Effectiveness
Santiago Izquierdo-Tort, Seema Jayachandran, and Santiago Saavedra

 **FEATURED JOBS**

Policy Manager (Health), Kigali, Rwanda

Senior Associate, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Research Associate (Education), Rabat, Morocco

Policy Manager (Health), New Delhi, Delhi, India

Research Associate (School Leadership Development), Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Finance and Operations Manager, Jakarta, Indonesia

Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow/Research Associate, Cambridge, MA, US

Policy Associate (Cost-Effectiveness and Welfare Analysis), Cambridge, MA, US

Senior Evidence to Scale Associate, Cambridge, MA, US

Senior Policy Associate (Cost-Effectiveness and Welfare Analysis), Cambridge, MA, US

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