



IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH EVIDENCE

Building on the Nobel Prize

2019–2020

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FROM THE GLOBAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Iqbal Dhaliwal

2019 WAS A BANNER YEAR FOR J-PAL ON MANY FRONTS.

We launched many exciting initiatives to expand the frontiers of research and evidence-informed policy, including in [digital finance](#) (Africa), [government innovation](#) (global), [migrants and social inclusion](#) (Europe), [work of the future](#) (North America), [Teaching at the Right Level](#) (Africa), and [use of administrative data](#) for faster, cheaper randomized evaluations (global).

Our existing research initiatives contributed funding to help launch 56 new randomized evaluations that test the most effective approaches to fighting poverty.

We grew our online [MicroMasters program](#) and admitted the first class of students in our new [Master's in Data, Economics, and Development Policy](#) at MIT.

And [we welcomed 20 top researchers to our affiliate network](#) while growing our talented team of research, policy, training, and operations staff worldwide.

2019 WAS ALSO NOTABLE FOR AN EXCEPTIONAL REASON.

J-PAL co-founders Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo and our longtime affiliate Michael Kremer were awarded the [2019 Nobel Prize in Economics](#) for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty.

In the midst of all the pomp and ceremony of the Nobel Week in Stockholm, it was incredibly humbling to witness the laureates donate their entire prize money to fund the next generation of researchers.

I was inspired to hear Abhijit in his [Nobel lecture](#) describe how the collective research of our brilliant affiliates helped establish the role of experiments in development economics, to watch Michael in his lecture draw the link between research and innovation that is helping make a positive change for millions of people worldwide, and to applaud Esther's impromptu exhortation, "There is a lot of work left to do to fight poverty and climate change—we better get back to it!"

But perhaps the most moving moment was seeing the three of them standing hand-in-hand on the Nobel stage, accepting congratulations on behalf of the movement.

It will be tough to top this Nobel year, but we are moving full steam ahead. We are doubling down on the hard work and strong, collaborative partnerships that helped this movement grow and succeed.



Members of J-PAL's leadership team gather in September 2019.

Back row, left to right: David Sears, Benjamin Olken, Anna Schrimpf, Iqbal Dhaliwal, Anja Sautmann, Abhijit Banerjee, Laura Poswell, John Floretta. Front row, left to right: Paula Pedro, Lina Marliani, Esther Duflo, Mary Ann Bates, Shobhini Mukerji. More detail on page 21.

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There is a lot of work left to do to fight poverty and climate change—we better get back to it!

– Esther Duflo, Nobel Prize banquet speech

In 2020, we will work to generate [cutting-edge research and innovative solutions](#) to key priority issues like COVID-19 response, climate change, labor, migration and refugees, social protection, taxation, and urban services.

We will conduct [policy outreach to ensure more decisions are grounded in evidence](#) and provide technical support to help scale up effective programs to reach millions more people experiencing poverty.

We will refocus our efforts to [build the capacity of local researchers and policymakers](#), leveraging our experience creating online courses and innovative learning settings like “flipped” classrooms.

We will continue our efforts to deepen our existing funding and field partnerships, and work hard to build new partnerships to help make this movement even more innovative, equitable, and impactful.

Throughout it all, we will strive to be nimble, be effective stewards of our donors’ resources, keep our partners’ and policymakers’ needs at the forefront, and push forward an evidence-based approach to fighting poverty around the world.

A big thank you to our affiliated researchers, staff, funders, and field partners who have been part of this two-decade-long journey and to those who have followed along and supported us in every way. And we are grateful to the millions of participants in thousands of studies, without whom none of this would be possible.

More than [400 million people](#) have been reached by scale-ups of programs evaluated by J-PAL affiliates, but there are hundreds of millions more not yet reached. So as we launch into a new decade, and the next chapter in J-PAL’s evolution, please join us: [support our work](#); enroll in a [training course](#); explore the [research, policy insights](#), and [scale-ups](#) on our website; [follow us on Twitter](#); or [get in touch with us](#) to find ways to collaborate.

Stay tuned to our [website](#) and [blog](#) for more from J-PAL as the year progresses—we do indeed have lots of work to do, and we cannot do it alone.

Iqbal Dhaliwal

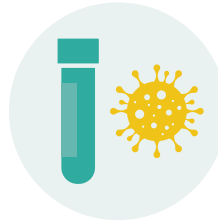
[@IqbalDhali](#) | [@JPAL](#)

THE YEAR AHEAD: 2020 AND BEYOND



CLIMATE CHANGE

Advance evidence-based policies in [climate change](#) mitigation and adaptation, as well as reducing pollution and increasing access to clean energy.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

Pilot innovative research methods and conduct proactive policy engagement to identify and scale effective approaches to pandemic response and recovery.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

Improve the effectiveness of programs to reduce poverty, inequality, vulnerability, and risk by launching new research on social protection policies.



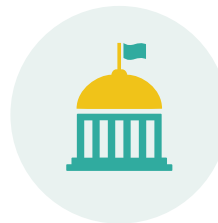
THE FUTURE OF WORK

Provide targeted funding to test the most promising strategies for job creation, job matching, skills training, and helping workers adapt to changing economies.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Build the capacity of local researchers and policymakers to carry out rigorous independent research and to make evidence-informed policy decisions.



INNOVATION IN GOVERNMENT

Work with forward-looking governments to adapt, pilot, and scale evidence-informed innovations through J-PAL's [Innovation in Government Initiative](#) (IGI).



BIG DATA

Increase the use of big data for evidence-informed decision-making through J-PAL's [Innovation in Data and Experiments for Action Initiative](#) (IDEA).



EXPANDING IN MENA

Build a presence in the [Middle East and North Africa](#) (MENA) to conduct policy-relevant research and engage with policymakers to improve lives.

THE YEAR AHEAD: 2020 WORLDWIDE PRIORITIES

J-PAL AFRICA

- Ramp up efforts to build local capacity for research and evidence-based policymaking in the region.
- Amplify the reach and activities of the [Digital Identification and Finance Initiative](#) (DigiFI) to better understand the impacts of digital IDs and payments on citizens and governments across Africa.
- Explore opportunities to create a local [Innovations in Data and Experiments for Action](#) Lab (IDEA) in South Africa to support better use of administrative data in decision-making.

J-PAL EUROPE

- Promote J-PAL as a thought leader and innovator in generating evidence for policy change across Europe.
- Expand J-PAL's [European Social Inclusion Initiative](#) to promote the inclusion of migrants and refugees across Europe.
- Publish policy analysis of lessons from rigorous evaluations on labor and education programs to meet the demands of policymakers.

J-PAL LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- Engage with donors to build new social policy initiatives throughout Latin America to support policymakers in making better, more evidence-informed decisions.
- Build partnerships with governments to create local [IDEA](#) labs to leverage administrative data for more effective public policies and programs.
- Generate new research and promote use of evidence on the topics of early childhood development, crime prevention, and education.

J-PAL MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA INITIATIVE

- Launch J-PAL's MENA regional office and engage with donors to expand research, policy, and training across the region.
- Launch new randomized evaluations on labor, education, social protection, and issues facing refugees and host communities.
- Deepen partnerships with governments to support the use of insights from existing research in decision-making and identify new opportunities to evaluate promising policies.

J-PAL NORTH AMERICA

- Leverage government partners and academic researchers to identify pressing needs among policymakers, synthesize findings on how to promote mobility from poverty, and identify opportunities for new research.
- Convene education leaders to establish formal research partnerships, provide technical support to implement evidence-based programs, and award “proof of concept” grants to support long-term programs.
- Promote take-up of the [Short-Term Research Management](#) (STReaM) program, in which J-PAL North America staff support researchers in project management, stakeholder engagement, and research design.

J-PAL SOUTH ASIA

- Support governments and donors to help shift funding toward more effective programs, including use of administrative data through [IDEA](#) and scale-ups related to immunization, gender attitudes, early childhood education, and extreme poverty.
- Deepen ongoing partnerships with state governments through evidence-to-policy dialogues, generating new research to respond to government priorities, and scaling up evidence-backed programs.
- Lead trainings and workshops throughout the South Asia to build capacity of government officials and civil society to understand and apply monitoring and evaluation tools and best practices.

J-PAL SOUTHEAST ASIA

- Support the government of Indonesia in developing evidence-backed approaches to key government priorities, including improving human capital.
- Launch the [Southeast Asia Inclusive Financial Innovation Initiative](#) to ensure that digital financial services drive economic development while lifting up women, low-income groups, and marginalized communities.
- Train researchers, policymakers, and journalists on impact evaluation methods, applying evidence to policymaking, and reporting on research findings.



“This movement has much left to accomplish, and plenty of room to grow. It requires many people in many different roles, be they researchers or survey enumerators, entrepreneurs or policymakers.”

– Michael Kremer, Nobel Prize lecture

THE ROAD TO THE NOBEL PRIZE

Beyond the 2019 Nobel Prize, many J-PAL affiliates and staff have received recognition for their innovative research and contributions to making the world a better place.

NOBEL MEMORIAL PRIZE



Abhijit Banerjee
2019



Esther Duflo
2019



Michael Kremer
2019

MACARTHUR FELLOWSHIP



Amy Finkelstein
2018



Raj Chetty
2012



Esther Duflo
2009



Sendhil Mullainathan
2002



Michael Kremer
1997

JOHN BATES CLARK MEDAL



Raj Chetty
2013



Amy Finkelstein
2012



Esther Duflo
2010

ELAINE BENNETT RESEARCH PRIZE



Erika Field
2010



Amy Finkelstein
2008



Marianne Bertrand
2004



Esther Duflo
2002

CAROLYN SHAW BELL AWARD



Rohini Pande
2019

MIT EXCELLENCE AWARD



Claire Walsh
2019



Caitlin Tulloch
2011

NOBEL CELEBRATIONS

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The research conducted by this year's Laureates has considerably improved our ability to fight global poverty. In just two decades, their new experiment-based approach has transformed development economics, which is now a flourishing field of research.

– Nobel Committee



Affiliate and 2019 Nobel laureate Michael Kremer with J-PAL Director Ben Olken at the Nobel ceremonies.

IN THE NEWS



Michael Kremer, Esther Duflo, and Abhijit Banerjee on the Nobel stage.



South Asia Executive Director Shobhini Mukerji, Esther Duflo, Abhijit Banerjee, and Global Executive Director Iqbal Dhaliwal.

NOBEL CELEBRATIONS



Esther Duflo and Abhijit Banerjee follow Nobel tradition in signing a chair at the Nobel Prize Museum.

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The Nobel Prize is a fitting recognition of the achievements of all three winners in applying development economics to alleviate poverty worldwide. Their approach has transformed the way governments, philanthropies, corporations, and NGOs strive to build a better world. We are delighted that Community Jameel, through J-PAL, has been part of Esther and Abhijit's mission to find the solution.

— Mohammed Jameel, Founder of Community Jameel

VOICES ON TWITTER



Narendra Modi 
@Narendra Modi



Excellent meeting with Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee. His passion towards human empowerment is clearly visible. We had a healthy and extensive interaction on various subjects. India is proud of his accomplishments. Wishing him the very best for his future endeavours.



Bill Gates 
@BillGates



Congrats to Esther Duflo, Abhijit Banerjee, and Michael Kremer for winning this year's [@NobelPrize](#) in economics. I've learned a lot from their pioneering work to better understand the complexities of the lives of the world's poorest people.



Hewlett Foundation 
@Hewlett_Found

Congratulations to economics [@NobelPrize](#) winners [#EstherDuflo](#), [#AbhijitBanerjee](#), [#MichaelKremer](#). We're proud to be longstanding supporters of [@JPAL](#), their research & the many organizations working to ensure rigorous evidence improves policies & programs to reduce global poverty.



Arnold Ventures 
@Arnold_Ventures



🎉🎉🎉 Congratulations to today's [#NobelPrize](#) winners, who revolutionized international development through the use of RCTs and other experimental designs—a great win for [#evidencebased](#) policy!

INNOVATIVE RESEARCH: LEADING THE WAY



A J-PAL enumerator administers a survey in Haryana, India.



J-PAL's IDEA Initiative launched in 2019 to increase use of administrative data for faster, less expensive randomized evaluations.

At J-PAL, we believe investing in rigorous research is essential to finding solutions to the world's greatest challenges. Our growing network of 194 affiliated researchers work with local partners across the globe to conduct randomized evaluations that help us understand which approaches are most effective in the fight against poverty.

J-PAL's research staff contribute to the implementation of cutting-edge research projects at every stage of the research process. In 2019, we expanded the infrastructure that supports our affiliates' research around the world, building partnerships with program implementers, overseeing hundreds of survey teams, and contributing to survey design, data collection, and statistical analysis.

Beyond field work, we [created world-class resources](#) on best practices for conducting field research to help ensure high-quality, policy-relevant evaluations; [improved research transparency](#) by making it easier than ever for researchers to pre-register an evaluation in a public database and publish their de-identified data; and [launched the IDEA Initiative](#), dedicating J-PAL funding and technical assistance to increase the use of administrative data by governments, nonprofits, and private firms for evidence-informed decision-making.

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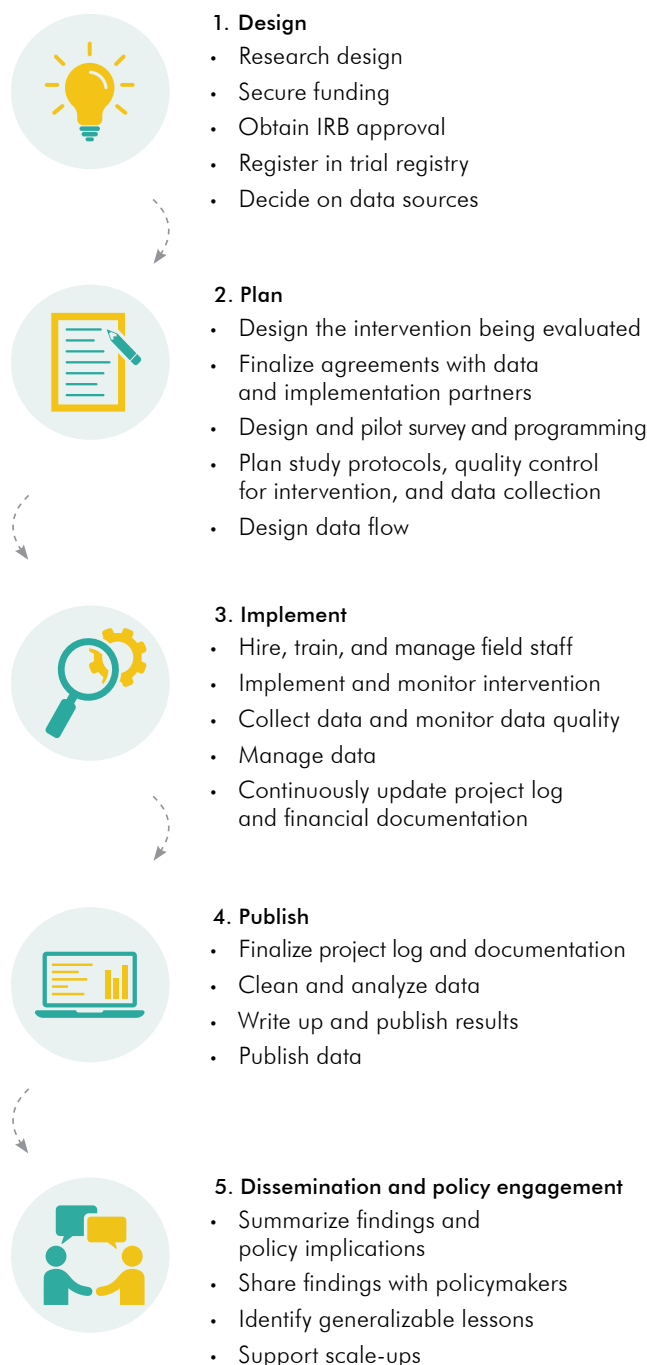


There are hundreds of researchers who have completely transformed this area... creating ideas that neither Michael nor Esther nor I ever thought of. That's the most wonderful thing that's happened to us and the field of development economics; and I say with genuine humility that this is a prize at least as much for them as it is for all of us.

– Abhijit Banerjee, Nobel Prize lecture

INNOVATIVE RESEARCH: LEADING THE WAY

J-PAL IS CLOSELY INVOLVED IN EVERY STAGE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS.



FRONTIERS OF POLICY-RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Transjakarta Public Transportation, Indonesia

Rema Hanna of Harvard and Ben Olken of MIT, along with Gabriel Kreindler of University of Chicago and Arya Gaduh of University of Arkansas, are partnering with Transjakarta, a public transportation provider in Jakarta, to improve the quality of its service, increase ridership, and reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. J-PAL Southeast Asia research staff are supporting the study.



Rema Hanna

Ministry of Education, Turkey

Sule Alan of the European University Institute and Bilkent University is partnering with the ministry to provide funding and technical guidance for a long-term evaluation of an innovative educational curriculum designed to help integrate Syrian refugees into Turkish schools. J-PAL's European Social Inclusion Initiative is funding the study.



Sule Alan

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (MA DTA), United States

Susanna Loeb of Brown University is partnering with the MA DTA to evaluate low-cost strategies to help families overcome behavioral and information barriers and to maintain their receipt of social services. J-PAL North America's State and Local Innovation Initiative is funding the study.



Susanna Loeb

J-PAL INITIATIVES: SEEDING POLICY-RELEVANT RESEARCH

J-PAL initiatives are partnerships with our major donors to:



1. Identify key policy priorities and gaps in the evidence where more research is needed;



2. Fund and provide technical support for innovative research on under-studied topics relevant to policymakers; and



3. Conduct policy outreach to share research results and help scale up effective programs.

WORLDWIDE RESEARCH AND POLICY INITIATIVES

Agriculture Technology and Adoption Initiative (ATAI):

Funds evaluations of programs that increase farmers' technology adoption and market integration.

Crime and Violence Initiative (CVI): Funds evaluations that focus on preventing, mitigating, and responding to the effects of crime and social and political violence.

Governance Initiative (GI): Funds randomized evaluations of interventions designed to improve participation in the political and policy process, reduce corruption and leakages, and strengthen state capacity.

Innovation in Government Initiative (IGI): Works with governments to adapt, pilot, and scale evidence-informed innovations with the potential to improve the lives of millions of people living in poverty in low- and middle-income countries.

Innovations in Data and Experiments for Action

(IDEA): Supports governments, firms, and nonprofits in using administrative data for better, faster, less expensive randomized evaluations.

Post-Primary Education Initiative (PPE):

Funds randomized evaluations that develop and test innovative solutions for improving access, quality, equity, and relevance of secondary, vocational, and tertiary education in low- and middle-income countries.

REGIONAL RESEARCH AND POLICY INITIATIVES

Africa Digital Identification and Finance Initiative

(DigiFI): Aims to increase the evidence base around innovations in identification and payments by supporting African governments in their efforts to monitor and evaluate relevant reforms.

South Asia Cash Transfers for Child Health Initiative

(CaTCH): Seeks to improve child health by generating policy-relevant rigorous evidence on the design and delivery of cash transfer programs in India.

European Social Inclusion Initiative (ESII):

Seeks to identify effective policy approaches to improve the social inclusion of migrants and refugees in Europe.

North America Education, Technology, and Opportunity Initiative:

Supports the design and implementation of randomized evaluations of education technology and innovative instructional programs aimed at improving learning outcomes in the United States.

J-PAL INITIATIVES BY THE NUMBERS (ALL TIME)

17

J-PAL
initiatives

\$63 M

Awarded for
new research

576

Full studies
funded

403

Pilot studies
funded

202

Exploratory
grants funded



Third- and fourth-grade students participate in a program designed to promote inclusion in the classroom, currently being evaluated under the European Social Inclusion Initiative.

North America Health Care Delivery Initiative (HCDI):

Supports randomized evaluations of strategies that aim to make health care delivery in the United States more efficient, effective, and equitable.

North America Social Policy Research Initiative (SPRI):

Supports randomized impact evaluations of innovative social programs and policies across a broad range of areas that can provide insights for learning which policies work best and why.

US State and Local Innovation Initiative (SLII): Assists state and local governments in using randomized evaluations to generate new and widely applicable lessons about which programs and policies work, which work best, and why.

North America Work of the Future Initiative: Identifies effective strategies to reduce the economic and social barriers associated with the changing nature of work.

J-PAL INITIATIVES ARE MADE POSSIBLE WITH
GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM OUR MAJOR DONORS



And many more valued funding partners, without whom this research would not be possible.

POLICY ENGAGEMENT: TRANSFORMING LIVES

J-PAL translates research into action, promoting a culture of evidence-informed policymaking around the world. J-PAL's policy group identifies policy lessons emerging from randomized evaluations, conducts outreach to share those lessons broadly, and builds partnerships with governments, nonprofits, and civil society organizations to inform high-level decision-making.

POLICY INSIGHTS

J-PAL [Policy Insights](#) highlight lessons emerging from randomized evaluations. When combined with a detailed understanding of context and program implementation, Policy Insights provide practical guidance for policy and program design.



Adolescent girls in India participate in an empowerment program designed to reduce adolescent pregnancy.



400,000,000+

People reached by programs that were scaled up after being evaluated by J-PAL affiliated researchers.

NEW POLICY INSIGHTS IN 2019

Agriculture, Finance

- [Facilitating Savings Among Smallholder Farmers](#)

Firms, Labor

- [Teaching Business Skills to Support Microentrepreneurs](#)
- [Supporting Firm Growth Through Consulting and Business Training](#)

Education

- [Increasing School Enrollment and Attendance: Impacts by Gender](#)
- [Reducing Costs to Increase School Participation](#)

Energy, Environment, & Climate Change

- [Encouraging Residential Energy Efficiency](#)

Governance

- [The Risks and Rewards of Voter Information Campaigns](#)

Health

- [The Limited Impact of US Workplace Wellness Programs](#)
- [Reducing Adolescent Pregnancy](#)

Labor

- [Changing Resumes to Reduce Hiring Discrimination](#)

FROM EVIDENCE TO POLICY

Evidence from randomized evaluations is changing how we understand and address problems related to poverty. Policymakers, practitioners, and funders worldwide are increasingly applying this learning to social policies and programs.

We have identified [six key pathways](#) through which evidence can influence policy.



Shifting global thinking: Knowledge generated by randomized evaluations has fundamentally shaped our understanding of many social policies.



Institutionalizing evidence use: Many organizations, including governments and large NGOs, have institutionalized processes for rigorously evaluating innovations and incorporating evidence into decision-making.



Applying research insights: Lessons from randomized evaluations have informed the design of effective programs.



Adapting and scaling a program: Programs originally evaluated in one context have been adapted and scaled in others.



Scaling up an evaluated pilot: Innovate, test, scale: replicating and expanding a successful evaluated pilot to similar contexts.



Scaling back an evaluated program: Innovate, test, reassess: partners have scaled down, redesigned, or decided to not move forward with programs that were evaluated and found to be ineffective.

CASE STUDIES

Giving directly to support low-income families: What happens when you give poor families cash, no strings attached? [A randomized evaluation](#) of Give Directly's program in Kenya found that unconditional cash transfers increased consumption, assets, and food security among recipients and their families. This helped mobilize resources to scale up the program to more than 125,000 households in rural Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.



A stand in Kenya advertises mobile-phone-based money transfer service M-Pesa, used by the NGO GiveDirectly to provide cash transfers.

Expanding housing options to improve economic

mobility: Living in historically under-invested neighborhoods has long been thought to negatively impact the economic mobility of residents. [A randomized evaluation](#) showed that helping families with young children move to neighborhoods with less poverty improved children's later-life outcomes and may have reduced the intergenerational persistence of poverty. The US government recently expanded housing choice for low-income families, citing the study as a key factor in the policy decision.

Reducing overfishing to protect the environment: Many marine species in Chile are at risk of collapse. [A randomized evaluation](#) found that consumer information campaigns and enforcement visits to vendors reduced the availability and consumption of an at-risk species during a seasonal fishing ban. Based on the research, the Chilean National Fish Service expanded the programs into its strategy to protect other overexploited species.

CAPACITY BUILDING: SHAPING THE FUTURE

With a focus on learning and innovation, J-PAL works to build the capacity of researchers who produce evidence, policymakers and donors who use it, and advocates of evidence-informed policy.

ONLINE LEARNING FOR ALL

J-PAL created and leads the online MITx [MicroMasters program in Data, Economics, and Development Policy](#). The program equips learners with the practical skills and theoretical knowledge to tackle some of the most pressing challenges facing developing countries and the world's poor.

Through a series of six online courses taught by leading economists, learners gain a strong foundation in microeconomics, development economics, and probability and statistics, while engaging with cutting-edge research in the field. To date, more than 1,500 learners from around the world have passed proctored exams and earned a certificate in at least one course.

RETHINKING GRADUATE EDUCATION

In 2019 we accepted the first cohort of 22 students in MIT's Department of Economics' new [Master's in Data, Economics, and Development Policy](#). Applicants are admitted to the program primarily on the basis of their performance in the rigorous online MicroMasters coursework, allowing learners to compete on an even playing field.

EXPANDING THE REACH OF THE MICROMASTERS IN DATA, ECONOMICS, AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Partnership with the government of India's Department of Personnel and Training

Under a partnership with J-PAL South Asia, the government of India's Department of Personnel and Training is offering reimbursements for [government staff to complete any of the six online course offerings](#) that are part of the MITx MicroMasters credential in Data, Economics, and Development Policy.

Hewlett Foundation scholarships for African learners

To help meet growing demand in sub-Saharan Africa for training and capacity building, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation is sponsoring [scholarships for students](#) to complete MicroMasters courses and the DEDP Master's program at MIT.

NEW ONLINE COURSE: POLITICAL ECONOMY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2019 J-PAL and MITx launched "Political Economy and Economic Development," the first ever elective in a MicroMasters program. The course, taught by J-PAL Directors and MIT professors Abhijit Banerjee and Ben Olken, explores why and how political institutions affect economic development, and applies key theories and empirical techniques to real-world examples ranging from voting and corruption to the role of the media.

J-PAL TRAINING BY THE NUMBERS (ALL TIME)

2,455

Participants in J-PAL's flagship week-long training, Evaluating Social Programs

6,472

Participants in 197 customized courses and workshops

1,684

Participants in research and staff trainings

97,120

People enrolled in J-PAL's online courses (excluding the MicroMasters)

CAPACITY BUILDING: SHAPING THE FUTURE

CUSTOMIZED TRAININGS ON A GLOBAL SCALE

J-PAL's [tailored trainings and workshops](#) around the world help policymakers incorporate evidence into decision-making and help research staff run high-quality, policy-relevant randomized evaluations.

TRAINING SNAPSHOTS

Pew Charitable Trusts, United States

In 2019, J-PAL North America partnered with Pew Charitable Trusts to provide three-day trainings to government agencies in states across the country to build evaluation capacity and to spur randomized evaluations of state and local programs and policies.

Project Incubator for Practitioners, Europe

As part of J-PAL's [European Social Inclusion Initiative](#), J-PAL Europe organized a training in May 2019 for policymakers working on the inclusion of migrants and refugees. The course was taught by J-PAL affiliates and senior J-PAL staff; more than 40 representatives attended from governments, international organizations, and NGOs in Europe.

Indian Economic Service, India

J-PAL South Asia led a week-long course in February 2019 for staff of the Indian Economic Service, responsible for monitoring and evaluating national social programs. The course gave participants an overview of cutting-edge methods used for monitoring, impact evaluation, and data collection, and included a special field work component to give participants firsthand knowledge of survey design and data collection.



J-PAL affiliate Luc Behaghel leads a course at a training in Europe in May 2019.

“



The opportunity to work with top researchers at MIT will enable me to glean from the best and test my ideas with the brightest minds.

— Lovemore Mawere, Zimbabwe

Incoming student in the new Master's in Data, Economics, and Development Policy program at MIT

2019 REGIONAL SNAPSHOTS: GLOBALLY INFORMED, LOCALLY GROUNDED



A Teaching at the Right Level classroom in Botswana, where J-PAL Africa is working with partners to scale up the program.



J-PAL North America's Evaluation Toolkit, launched in 2019, provides best practices for conducting randomized evaluations in the North America region.

J-PAL's regional offices lead the way in building partnerships, translating research results into policy lessons relevant for local contexts, and carrying out research on the ground. Our team of trained research associates work closely with affiliates and implementing partners to ensure research is aligned with J-PAL's high standards for data quality, ethics, and technical rigor.

J-PAL AFRICA

- Launched [Teaching at the Right Level \(TaRL\)](#) Africa, a joint venture by J-PAL and the Indian NGO Pratham that provides high-level support to governments and other partners across the continent to scale up TaRL's evidence-backed approach. The TaRL Africa team has supported partners in 12 countries across the continent.
- Launched the [Digital Identification and Finance Initiative](#).

J-PAL EUROPE

- Launched the [European Social Inclusion Initiative](#).
- Extended and intensified efforts to promote use of evidence in social policy across Europe, including Austria, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, and Turkey.
- Trained more than 200 people in rigorous evaluation, including government officials from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Turkey.

J-PAL LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- Celebrated ten-year anniversary of J-PAL Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) conducting high-quality research, policy outreach, and training in the region.
- Collaborated with Mexico City's municipal Agencia Digital de Innovación Pública to develop four randomized evaluations of programs designed to improve governance and reduce corruption.
- Supported adaptation of the Teaching at the Right Level approach to the LAC region, piloted the program in 35 rural schools in Peru, and conducted scoping and needs assessments in El Salvador and Guatemala.



A rug producer in Egypt, where J-PAL is expanding its work—including a study led by J-PAL affiliates David Atkin and Adam Osman, with Amit K. Khandelwal, evaluating the impact of a rug export program on the profits and productivity of small firms.

J-PAL MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA INITIATIVE

- Building on the MoU signed with the American University in Cairo in 2018 to create the J-PAL/AUC Initiative for Egypt, worked to build a permanent J-PAL satellite office to support affiliates' randomized evaluations and policy outreach in Egypt.
- Led implementation of more than ten ongoing randomized evaluations in the region.

J-PAL NORTH AMERICA

- Launched the North America [Work of the Future Initiative](#).
- Celebrated six-year anniversary of the [US Health Care Delivery Initiative \(HCDI\)](#). To date, HCDI has supported more than 30 evaluations on issues like health insurance, maternal health, and economic and racial disparities.
- Launched the [Evaluation Toolkit](#), a comprehensive suite of online resources that supports research teams in designing and implementing high-quality randomized evaluations in North America.

J-PAL SOUTH ASIA

- Partnered with the government of India to offer the online MicroMasters in Data, Economics, and Development Policy to civil servants across the country as part of the government's formal suite of online courses.
- Signed [MOU](#) with the National Health Mission of Haryana, India to improve use of data in policy decisions.
- Supported scale-ups of programs designed to change gender attitudes among youth in Odisha, support early childhood development through math games in Delhi, and improve immunization rates in Haryana.

J-PAL SOUTHEAST ASIA

- Led high-level outreach to government of Indonesia policymakers, including the Office of the President, Ministry of National Development Planning, and Ministry of Social Affairs, to communicate evidence from randomized evaluations related to government policy priorities.
- Conducted randomized evaluations of many of the government of Indonesia's flagship national programs, including health insurance, cash transfers, electronic vouchers, and tax administration.
- Partnered with Indonesian researchers as co-Principal Investigators on all ongoing research projects.

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J-PAL's annual Board of Directors meeting in Cambridge, MA, September 2019.

Back row, left to right: Marc Gurgand, Anja Sautmann, Dean Karlan, Nicholas Bloom, Michael Greenstone, Shawn Cole, Abhijit Banerjee, Pascaline Dupas, Rohini Pande, Lina Marliani, Ben Olken, Paula Pedro, Bruno Crépon, Marianne Bertrand, Shobhini Mukerji, Philip Oreopoulos, Anna Schrimpf, Joseph Doyle, Laura Poswell, Iqbal Dhaliwal, Craig McIntosh, David Atkin, John Floretta, William Parienté

Front row, left to right: Francisco Gallego, Lawrence Katz, Tavneet Suri, David Sears, Kelsey Jack, Amy Finkelstein, Karen Macours, Seema Jayachandran, Esther Duflo, Oeindrila Dube, Mary Ann Bates

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J-PAL co-founders Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo and longtime J-PAL affiliate Michael Kremer were awarded the 2019 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics “for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty.”



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